

SIXTEEN
SERMONS
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS.

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SIXTEEN
SERMONS
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS,

BY GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED INTO ONE VOLUME.

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THE
SERMON
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS

BY GEORGE HORN, D.D.

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PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S,

ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1761.

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AT ST. MARY'S

ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1801

S E R M O N I.

1 P E T. II. 21.

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

WH E N the angels beheld the dark and disordered state of created nature upon its first production, they were, doubtless, thrown into some perplexity to conceive how it should ever be made a means of manifesting forth the glory of the Creator. But when they saw the light spring up, at the divine command, from that blackness of darkness, and fix it's residence in it's tabernacle the sun, illuminating and adorning the firmament of heaven with it's glorious shew, and the earth with it's beautiful furniture, all formed out of rudeness and confusion, then they confessed that the difficulty of the work served only to display the skill of the workmaster, which is proportionably estimated by the unpromising nature of the materials.

In like manner, whoever views the chaos to which the infinite wisdom of a presiding Providence sometimes permits the moral world to be reduced by the prevailing power of the prince of darkness, and the agency of his instruments, will scarce be able, at first, to discern any traces of the divine counsels in a mirror so sullied and clouded over by the enormities of sinful men. Yet let him wait with patience for a little season, and those clouds shall pass away; a light shall shine, and some great end present itself to sight, so worthy of God, so beneficial to man, that standing amazed at a power able to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, he will be forced to cry out concerning the œconomy of the spiritual system, as *David* did concerning the operations of the natural — “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all*.”

What a gloomy and comfortless scene to the eye of flesh was exhibited in *Judea*, when the pure and innocent Jesus, forsaken by all his disciples, was delivered up into the hands of wicked men, to end a life of righteousness and mercy by a death of pain and shame!

* Ps. civ. 24.

Certainly

Certainly that was the hour of the ungodly, and the power of darkness. But in that very hour was God glorified, and the world redeemed. And while the *Egyptians* look upon a cloud which they cannot see through, *Israel* beholds in the same column a bright and shining light, directing and conducting them to the Land of Promise.

And as nothing that was ever transacted upon the theatre of this world brought so much glory to God on high as the passion of the *Messiah*, so next to that, because the nearest resemblance of it, precious and most honourable in his sight is the death of his saints. St. *John* "heard a voice from heaven," enjoining him to write, and declare to the world, that "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord^b." More blessed, surely, are they that die not only *in him*, but *for him*, and lay down their lives in a good and a righteous cause. And though in the eyes of men the church might appear more amiable when, exulting in the favour of *Constantine*, she wore the white garments of joy and festivity, and carried the palm of victory and triumph in her hand, yet we know that she was never dearer to

^b Rev. xiv. 13.

God, because never more conformed to the image of his Son, than just before that period of time, when, persecuted by the fury of *Dioclesian*, she was seen arrayed in the scarlet robe of martyrdom, and bore her cross after Jesus. Prosperity in this world, besides that it is an argument which will conclude for and against every cause and party in their turns, can never be the badge of his disciples, who came into the world in a stable, among the beasts that perish, and went out of it upon a cross, numbered with malefactors: And whoever makes this the criterion of the divine favour, must condemn the generation of God's children, from righteous *Abel* to the blessed martyr of this day; upon whose unparalleled murder though we cannot reflect but with horror and astonishment, yet most gratefully are we ever bound to commemorate the glories of God's grace, which he made the villany of the most abandoned miscreants an occasion of calling forth and displaying to mankind in the person of his anointed, enabled thereby so stedfastly to look unto and so closely to copy after his Master and Saviour, who "left him an example, that he should follow his steps"—And he followed them unto the end.

But

But as exceptions have been taken at discourses on this day's occasion, as well as at some parts of the church service appointed for it, on account of their instituting what have been called *impious comparisons* between our Lord and the royal martyr, it will not be amiss, before we proceed, to obviate that objection. Some considerations therefore shall be laid before you, to evince that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is set forth to us in the holy scriptures as an *example* which we are to *follow*; and, consequently, that every Christian, so far as he does follow that example, and lives and dies in the spirit of his master, is so far *conformed*, or *made like* unto him; by which it will appear, that as the royal martyr did eminently follow this example of Christ, and so was eminently conformed and made like unto him, there can be no *impiety* in comparing him with his blessed master.

Our Lord then, let it be observed, was, as our church well expresses it in one of her collects, "both a *sacrifice for sin*, and also an " *ensample of godly life* ". By his sacrifice he procured us grace to follow his example,

‘ Collect for the second Sunday after *Easter*.

which otherwise had been proposed to us in vain; by his example he shewed us how to make a right use of that grace, which unless we do, it is given in vain. So that if he who regards him as an example, and not as a Redeemer, will be lost because he *cannot* follow him; he who takes him for a Redeemer, and not for an example, will be lost because he *does not* follow him; since Redemption was in order to holiness; and although it be most certain that without Christ no man can attain unto holiness, yet is it no less certain, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” He only is fully and effectually redeemed, and has evidence to assure him of it, who bears stamped on his soul the image and superscription of his Saviour. Considered indeed as the Redeemer of the world, Christ stands single and unapproachable as the sun in the heavens. “He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people
 “there were none with him^d; for no man can by
 “any means redeem his brother, nor give unto
 “God a ransom for him^e.” When therefore he bids us *learn of him*, the lesson proposed is not to cleanse the lepers, or to raise the dead; to create, or to redeem; but to be like him in

^d Isai. lxiii. 3.^e Ps. xlix. 7.

all his holy and heavenly tempers and dispositions——“Learn of me, for I am meek, and “lowly of heart’.” So far then are we from being guilty of any impiety, when we point out a similitude between Christ and his faithful servants, that perhaps we could not give a more just and adequate definition of the religion we profess, than if we were to say, “it consists in the imitation of him as man, the “first born among many brethren, whom we “adore as God, the Saviour of the world.”

Nor indeed can any one fail to see that the life of Christ was designed as a pattern for his followers, who considers how admirably it is calculated for that purpose. We meet not here with legendary tales of romantic austerities, ecstasies, and abstractions, tending only to amaze and embarrass the consciences of men with unprofitable and unnecessary scruples; but we behold a life which, though holy and without spot or blemish from beginning to end, was conducted after the manner of men, and so as to be imitable by them; being passed in the midst of civil society, and in the exercise of all those lovely graces by which that is preserved and improved, sweetened and

¹ Matt. xi. 29.

sanctified.

sanctified. "The glories of the life of Jesus
" (says one who studied it thoroughly) were
" so great, that the most early and constant
" industry must confess it's own imperfection;
" and yet was it so sweet and humane, that
" the greatest infirmity, if pious, shall find
" comfort and encouragement. Thus God
" gave his children manna from heaven; and
" though it was excellent like the food of angels,
" yet it conformed to every palate, according
" to that appetite produced by their several
" constitutions^{*}." And should we not find it
the best compendium of morality, the most
perfect and unerring rule whereby to direct
ourselves in all cases, if we would only ask
our own hearts, before we enter upon an ac-
tion, how the blessed Jesus would behave in
our circumstances? A conscience but mo-
derately informed from the Gospel would sel-
dom, perhaps, give a wrong determination.
But the truth is, we are afraid of the an-
swer, and therefore dare not ask the question.

Such then being the life of Christ, what
wonder that all men should be so frequently
called to an imitation of it, as we find they

^{*} Exhortation to the imitation of the life of Christ, in Bishop
Taylor's Great Exemplar, sect. 8.

are in the Holy Scriptures? The Apostle, Rom. viii. 21. asserts, that our conformity to Christ was the great end and design of the divine counsels concerning us. "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Accordingly, the initiatory sacrament of baptism, as our church from the Scriptures informs us, "doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and be made like unto him." And therefore we are continually reminded and exhorted to hold fast, to live conformably to this our profession. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked^b." Thus only can we be delivered from all blindness of heart, and brought to a knowledge of the truth. For—"He that followeth me," saith he, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life^c." St. Paul propounds his own example to the *Corinthians*, because it was a copy of Christ's—"Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ^d." To such only is the reward promised—"Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye

^b 1 John ii. 6.^c John viii. 12.^d 1 Cor. xi. 1.

"also

“also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the
 “twelve tribes of Israel¹.” And lastly, the cha-
 racter given of the *Israel* of God by the well
 beloved *John* is — “These are they which fol-
 “low the Lamb whithersoever he goeth².”

And if we consider what the path was
 in which the *Lamb of God* went before us,
 we shall see in what respect we are more es-
 pecially commanded to follow him, viz. in
suffering with meekness and resignation; which
 indeed is the particular alluded to in the text.
 The Apostle is enforcing the duty of bearing
 chastisement patiently “when we do well, and
 “suffer for it,” from a consideration of it’s be-
 ing the nature of our profession, which he
 proves from the sufferings of it’s great author,
 and the example he afforded us in the things
 which he endured. “For even hereunto were
 “ye called, because Christ also suffered for us,
 “leaving us an example, that he should follow his
 “steps.” The Christian profession therefore be-
 ing a state of suffering in this life, and the
 patience of Christ under all his sufferings de-
 signed as a pattern to us under all ours, it fol-
 lows, that every Christian who suffers patiently
 on this principle is *conformed* or *made like unto*

¹ Matt. xix. 28.

² Rev. xiv. 4.

Christ in this respect, as our Lord says all his disciples must be—"Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me". And the Apostle speaks of the sufferings of himself and his fellow labourers in this light, with a depth and energy of expression altogether inimitable—"Always" (says he) bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh". It was therefore our martyr's duty, and his enemies took care he should not want an opportunity of practising it—it was, I say, our martyr's duty, to be LIKE his Lord and master: and they who object to the truth of this are ignorant of their own duty, and of the *Christian* character, which is all a copying after the perfect original of Christ, from the mortification of the old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and passions, which answers to his sufferings and crucifixion, to the entire renewal of the whole man in righteousness and true holiness, after his blessed image, which answers to his resurrection.

^a Luke ix. 23.

^o 2 Cor. iv. 10.

But

But why should it be thought a thing incredible, that the character of a Christian king should bear a resemblance to Christ since his coming in the flesh, when we all know that the characters of some of the kings of *Israel* bore so near a resemblance, that they had the honour to prefigure him before his coming? In the Psalms are described to us by the very same words the sufferings of *David*, and those of *the Son of David*; the glory of *Solomon*, and that of *the Prince of peace*. If therefore many passages, allowed to be prophetically descriptive of the *Messiah*, were at first spoken of a temporal prince, where can be the impropriety of applying them to another temporal prince in the same or like circumstances with him of whom they were originally uttered? This consideration, it is humbly presumed, fully justifies the use which is made of some texts of this sort in the hymn appointed to be used upon this day instead of the *venite exultemus*: since, however strongly characteristical they are of our Lord, yet are they not so absolutely appropriated to him, but that they were once true, in the letter, of a king of *Israel*; and therefore may with innocence and propriety be transferred from him
to

to a king of *England*, who, had he too been a king of *Israel* in old time, had been as eminent and distinguished a fore-runner of Christ, as he was a follower of him.

Nor let us wonder when we find the lives, and actions, and sufferings of all the saints from the beginning to the end of the world bearing such an analogy to those of Christ, and of each other. For it cannot possibly, in the nature of things, be otherwise; seeing they all walk by the same way to the same end, and it is one and the self-same Spirit that lives and rules in their hearts, forming and fashioning them to one and the same model of devotion and piety, temperance and chastity, humility and meekness, patience and resignation, faith and charity, righteousness and holiness. And there is an analogy also, for the same cause, between the lives and actions of *the children of disobedience* in all ages and nations, as the same spirit worketh in them all, and the same part is acted, be the actor's name *Cain, Korah, or Cromwell*.

All these things therefore duly weighed, viz. that Christ was not only a sacrifice for sin, but also an ensample of godly life; that his life was in the most admirable manner
calculated

calculated for the imitation of all mankind; that all are continually called to an imitation of it, particularly in the article of suffering patiently; that many kings, as well as priests and prophets, of old had the honour to prefigure it, and, consequently, that kings in after ages may copy it; and lastly, that all holy persons must of necessity be like *their* master and each other, for the same reason that the children of disobedience are so; we may now proceed, it is hoped, without offence, to take a view of the blessed martyr, as a follower of his Lord, or, in other words, as a true disciple of the holy Jesus; as living the life and dying the death of a CHRISTIAN KING.

And indeed, when we behold that constellation of graces both active and passive which shone forth in the character of this excellent prince, we should be at a loss where to begin, but that he himself has left us a direction, in that advice to his son, drawn from his own practice — “With GOD I would have you “begin, and end.” In all things, at all times, and all seasons, his rule was, to “seek first the “kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” Religion had taken possession of his heart, and im-

* *Eikon*, sect. 27.

pregnated

pregnated with it's benign and salutary influences all the streams that proceeded from that fountain of life. Piety, too generally banished from among the attendants upon princes, as fit only for the cell and the cloyster, was shewn to be not incompatible with the pleasures of a court, and the cares of a crown; but seemed then to be in it's proper province, when employed in moderating the former by it's wholesome discipline, and alleviating the latter by it's celestial comforts. Certain it is, that neither the one nor the other could hinder the king from "kneeling upon his knees," like the greatly beloved *Daniel* in the court of *Babylon*, at the appointed seasons, "and praying "and giving thanks before his God;" nor could any message, however afflictive and alarming, engage his attention for a single moment, till that blessed work was finished. His soul, like the royal bird, borne upwards on the strong and well-poised pinions of a devotion as manly as it was ardent, and having the eyes of her faith fixed on the glories of the sun of righteousness, left the world and all things in it behind her, till her return. What a noble sight is Christianity seated upon a throne!

^r Dan. vi. 10.

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^{*} Dan. vi. 10.

C

From

From such an eminence how does the fair light of a good example diffuse itself far and wide through all the regions of the surrounding darkness, to warm the frozen sons of ignorance and indevotion ! And how will such an example of a prince incumbered with the concerns of a whole kingdom, and yet finding time for a constant attendance on all his religious exercises, and suffering nothing to interrupt him in them, how will it in the day of judgment condemn a careless ungodly sort of people, who neglect the service of God when they have *any thing* else to do, and—when they have *nothing* else to do !

He who is accustomed to the spiritual delights of prayer, the joys of thanksgiving, and the felicities of a good conscience, soon comes, in the same degree as he relishes *them*, to loath the sinful pleasures of sensuality. We are the less surprised therefore, after beholding the unfeigned piety of this prince, to find him living amidst all the temptations of sense heightened and set off to the utmost, with the strict temperance of an ascetic, and holding forth to all ages and generations a rare example of purity and conjugal fidelity ; his very thoughts being so entirely brought into subjection

subjection to the ruling principle within him, that they were not suffered to wander beyond the divinely appointed limits, to strange and forbidden objects*. And with regard to the irascible passions, his soul partook of the nature of those superior regions whither she so often resorted, where the storms and tempests that disturb the peace of this lower world are not known, and no spirit is stirring but that of universal love.

If we trace this love in it's emanations to all about him, what must we think of that meeting of the king and his royal offspring after some years absence, the sight of which moved the heart of *Cromwell* himself to compassionate and applaud the unfortunate monarch, whose blood he thirsted after, and with which he was shortly to satiate himself. In what abundance the same benignity streamed forth towards his faithful servants we may judge by this remarkable circumstance, that when some of them appeared in his presence with the usual tokens of sorrow for their relations lately slain in his service, "he paid
 " his friends (says one of the historians) a
 " tribute which none of his own unparalleled

* Princess *Elizabeth*'s relation subjoined to the *Eikon*.

“ misfortunes ever extorted from him — he
 “ dissolved into a flood of tears.” And when
 we consider what sort of enemies he had, and
 yet how mild and gracious he shewed himself
 in all his dealings with them, which they
 took care to repay as such men always do, we
 cannot but be much surprised to see, in one of
 the latest discourses published upon this occa-
 sion, the epithet of *unforgiving* applied to
 him, and find ourselves in a manner irresistibly
 compelled to suppose it an error of the press.

For, surely, none of his subjects, how-
 ever distant from his person, were out of the
 sphere of his affection. He loved them all :
 his care for their bodies was exceeded only
 by his concern for their souls : and esteeming
 the church of *England* their best and safest
 guide through all the difficulties and dangers of
 this world to the glories of the next, he there-
 fore loved her with an exceeding great and
 tender love. But hear his own words——
 “ God’s glory and the church’s good I think
 “ myself so much the more bound in consci-
 “ ence to attend with the most judicious zeal

¹ *Hume*, p. 457.

² The Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*’s Sermon preached before the
 Right Honourable the House of Lords, *Jan.* 30, 1760, p. 12.

“ and

“and care, by how much I esteem the church
“above the state, the glory of Christ above
“mine own, and the salvation of men’s souls
“above the preservation of their bodies and
“estates.” This most Christian king regarded
the Church as the spouse of Christ, for whom
he disdained not to shed his most precious
blood, and the church of *England* as that
portion of this church of which himself was
appointed the guardian and protector. It was
not through *church bigotry* or *pious prejudice* that
he was firmly attached to her constitution,
but from a full and thorough conviction of
it’s rectitude and conformity to the apostolical
model, as “keeping the middle way (I use
“his own words) between the pomp of su-
“perstitious tyranny, and the meanness of fan-
“tastic anarchy.” The former of these,
decked in gorgeous array, had spread forth all
her charms to allure him when abroad in the
early days of youth; the latter endeavoured
to dispute and terrify him into a compliance,
while he was a prisoner in his own kingdom.
But both attempts were alike fruitless and
impotent. He returned from *Spain*, confirm-
ed in his good opinion of the *English* church,

^w *Eikon*, sect. 13.^x *Eikon*, sect. 27.

by having viewed the corruptions of the *Roman* (an effect which is not always seen in those who go to view them); and vanquished the mighty champion of *presbytery* in the day of his affliction, and in the land of his captivity; as the still extant papers relating that contest abundantly testify. Not to mention, that in the treaty of *Newport*, during the transactions of two months, in which religion bore so large a share, he, alone, now grown gray, more in sorrows than years, “sustained
 “the argument against fifteen men of the
 “greatest parts and capacities of both houses,
 “and no advantage was ever obtained over
 “him,” but all stood amazed, we are told by one of his latest historians, at “his quick
 “conception, cultivated understanding, chaste
 “elocution, and dignified manner.” How greatly is it to be lamented, that a prince thus qualified to adorn the church by his life, and defend her by his writings, should find himself disabled by his own subjects from testifying his love in any other way than by dying for her! If any thing could be fancied to exceed this their enormity, it must be a supposition (were such a supposition possible) that

† *Hume*, p. 451.

this

this noble attachment to the church should be *sneered at* by a churchman of that high order for whose preservation he resisted even unto blood.

With regard to the transactions of state, a preacher must not commence *historian*, or *politician*. Suffice it therefore to recommend to your candid and impartial consideration the following matters of fact; that *England* never was a more happy and flourishing kingdom, than in the former part of this monarch's reign^a; that one of the most furious of the republican party said after his death, that—"If they desired a king, the last was "as proper as any gentleman in *England*;"^b that he was libelled before he was crowned^b; that the first parliament he called refused him the supplies requisite for the carrying on a war entered into by his father at their importunate solicitation, and thereby distressed him to the utmost^c; that the ancient laws of the kingdom, as well as the precedents of his predecessors, set the prerogative of the crown much higher than we are now taught to

^a *Clarendon, Carte, Hume*, and the histories in general.

^a *Hume*, p. 471.

^b *Carte*, p. 135.

^c *Carte*, p. 140; *Hume*, p. 144.

conceive of it, and seemed to warrant him in the measures he was necessitated to take for the procuring a supply^d; that it is by no means fair to form a judgment of practices in one age, by principles which happened to prevail in another; that the king, however, quitted all his claims which had been charged with illegality, and passed more acts of grace than ever were passed in one reign, not only repairing the breaches he was supposed to have made in the constitution, but erecting new ramparts for it's future security; that his adversaries made no other use of his concessions but to rise in their demands, till at length, the proper season for it being arrived, they spoke out, and refused to be content with any thing less than the abolition of episcopacy, and to have the power of the militia vested in their hands; that they seized his majesty's forts and garrisons, his fleet and army; that the king's total unpreparedness for war shewed how little he intended it^e; that he sent to the two houses, at different times, before as well as after his imprisonment, *forty* messages for peace^f; and in order to the obtaining it

^d Hume, passim.

^e Eikon, sect. 19.

^f Printed in the *Reliquiæ Carolinae*.

made more concessions than he could justify, and such as he afterwards bewailed with the sorrows of a most sincere and bitter repentance^z; and lastly, that, to prove himself to have been by no means the author of that desolating war, he appealed, upon the scaffold, to the respective dates of his own and the parliamentary commissions for levying troops^a. Whoever shall reflect upon all these particulars, will find himself obliged to draw from thence two conclusions; first, that the king was perfectly innocent of the war, and all it's dismal consequences: secondly, that the leaders of the faction had formed a plan, which they were determined not to rest till they had carried into execution, for the total overthrow of the constitution in church and state, and the introduction of a presbyterian republic in it's room; for the effecting which they were always upon the watch, ready to make their advantage with the people prepared for their purpose by seditious pamphlets and enthusiastic sermons, of every hasty and precipitate measure into which they could trepan or force their sovereign. Such appears plainly

^z See his prayer and confession subjoined to the *Eikon*.

^a See his last speech as given by the historians.

and

and undeniably to have been the scheme projected and invariably pursued by the heads of that party which was formed by what has been lately called a coalition of PATRIOTS and PURITANS, but what may, perhaps, be more properly styled a combination of REBELS and SCHISMATICS, or rather, of REBELLIOUS SCHISMATICS, both principles being duly mixed and thoroughly incorporated into the constitutions of the parliamentary leaders¹. “And if” (says a very acute and sagacious writer, and one who is far from being a friend to monarchical principles, upon an ample survey of the transactions of those times, and the circumstances the king was in), “if his political prudence was insufficient to
 “extricate him from so perilous a situation,
 “he may be excused; since, even after the
 “event, when it is commonly easy to correct
 “all errors, one is at a loss to determine what
 “conduct, in his circumstances, could have
 “maintained the authority of the crown, and
 “preserved the peace of the nation. Exposed to
 “the assaults of furious, implacable, and bigoted
 “factions, it was never permitted him, without the most fatal consequences, to commit

¹ See *Hume*, p. 146.

“ the

"the smallest mistake; a condition too rigorous to be imposed on the greatest human capacity." In a word then we may conclude, that had this prince lived in better times, and reigned over a people uninfected with the insinuating, inflating, and souring leaven of *fanaticism*, he had been the delight of mankind, and his kingdom the joy of the whole earth.

But so had God ordained, that he was to be eminent in another way, and to be "made perfect through sufferings," like his blessed master, of whose passion and behaviour under it he certainly held forth the most lively portraiture that ever was drawn in the fainter colours of mere humanity. Therefore it pleased the Almighty to cast this choice and most precious piece of royal gold into the burning fiery furnace of adversity, where he is universally allowed to have shone to the last with unrivalled and undiminished lustre. The same divine person, who came down to the three children in the *Babylonian* furnace, evidenced his presence with this his faithful servant in all his afflictions, by that uniform equanimity, that absolute resignation, that invincible patience,

* Hume, p. 469.

that

that winning meekness of love, by which he is said to have gained as many hearts as he conversed with persons. Men thought they could never sufficiently admire the unaffected ease and cheerfulness with which he descended from his regal dignities, and passed through all the various scenes of his pitiable calamities, the heaviest of which seem never to have excited any emotion in his mind, but that of compassion for his infatuated persecutors. It was observed particularly by his curious and prying attendants, that the letter which brought him the first news of his being sold by the *Scotch* to his implacable enemies in *England*, produced not the least alteration in his countenance¹; being “only sorry (as “himself expresses it) that *they* should do it, “and that his price should be so much above “his Saviour’s^m.” Confined to the frightful solitude of a prison, from which, so great was his sense of honour and probity, that he would not escape when it was in his power, because he had given his word to the parliament, although he knew certain death was the consequence—confined, I say, to the frightful solitude of a prison, and cut off from all in-

¹ *Hume*, p. 422.

^m *Eikon*, sect. 23.

tercourse with earth, being denied the attendance of his very chaplains to minister to him in his spiritual necessities, he kept the communication with heaven still open, and from thence received supplies the more abundant for his exclusion from the ordinary means of grace. Here he experienced the benefit of having been conversant in the Scriptures in the days of vigour and prosperity, when he walked in the garden of God, and from the divine precepts and promises, which are the flowers of that garden, extracted those lessons of eternal wisdom, which proved his support and consolation when the dark and stormy winter of adversity set in upon him; and which will ever continue to afford both instruction and comfort to the afflicted soul that shall make her abode in his inimitable meditations—a book inferior only to the sacred writings, and which it were much to be wished were the companion of every son and daughter of the church of *England*. A writer, who cannot be suspected of any partiality on the side of the king's *religion*, yet speaking of his amiable deportment during his imprisonment, bears this testimony to it's power in him — “The great source, whence the
“ king

“ king derived consolation amidst all his calamities, was undoubtedly religion ;” let us be permitted to add, it was the *Christian* religion, as professed in the Church of *England* ;
 “ a principle, which, in him, seems to have contained nothing fierce nor gloomy, nothing which enraged him against his adversaries, or terrified him with the dismal prospect of futurity. While every thing around him bore a hostile aspect ; while friends, family, relations, whom he passionately loved, were placed at a distance, and impotent to serve him ; he reposed himself with confidence in the arms of that Being, who penetrates and sustains all nature,” let us add, who likewise in Jesus Christ redeemed the world, and whose severities, if received with piety and resignation, he regarded as the surest pledge of unexhausted favour ^a.

Thus prepared, he had nothing to do, but to wait with patience and obey with joy the divine summons to quit the *wilderness*, and pass over *Jordan* into *that good land*, to those *everlasting hills*, the prospect of which had long been the solace and delight of his soul “ in the house of her pilgrimage.” During the so-

^a *Hume*, p. 446.

lemn mockery of his unheard of trial, the audacious insolence of his pretended judges, the barbarous and brutal insults, the revilings and the spittings of the merciless soldiers, "his soul" (as the aforementioned writer beautifully "expresses it), without effort, or affectation, "seemed only to remain in the situation familiar to it, and to look down with contempt "on all the efforts of human malice and iniquity *." On the fatal morning—fatal, alas! to *England*, not to him—he arose with sprightfulness and alacrity from that sweet sleep which a good cause and a good conscience can procure in the most perilous seasons, and which the noise of workmen employed in framing the scaffold for his execution, though resounding continually in his ears, had never been able either to prevent, or disturb †. Exulting as a strong man, strong in faith, to run his appointed race, he desired to be dressed and adorned with more than usual care, as it had been his bridal day, which indeed, in one sense, it was, when his soul was to be "called "to the marriage supper of the Lamb," and to "go forth," as one of the "wise virgins, to meet "the Bridegroom." Having trimmed his lamp

* *Hume*, p. 464.

† *Hume*, p. 466.

therefore

therefore with the proper preparatory devotions of that church which was ever so dear unto him, his mild spirit terminated it's earthly course with an act of the highest charity to his enemies, and taking the wings of the pure and peaceful *Dove*, flew away to that blessed place, where, and where *only*, as he found by experience, "the wicked cease from troubling, and "the weary are at rest."

Thus lived and thus died CHARLES THE FIRST, KING, AND MARTYR. And though for your sakes I could wish the task of drawing a portrait from such an original had been in other hands, for my own I cannot but greatly rejoice at being called upon to bear a testimony, poor as it is, to a character which, however traduced by base and worthless men, (and none but such can traduce it) does and for ever will do as much honour to the church, as the usage this prince met with reflects dishonour on the people of *England*.

And now, what remains, but that while we detest, and use our utmost endeavours to eradicate out of the minds of men those diabolical principles of *resistance to government in church and state*, which brought his sacred head to the block, we testify our regard for
his

his precious memory by an imitation of his godlike virtues; setting before us, and copying, as well as we can, his unfeigned piety, his strict temperance, his spotless purity, his indulgent affection towards his relations, his tender love for his friends, his compassionate forgiveness of his enemies, his inviolable attachment to the church of God. And in the day of affliction, when it shall please our heavenly Father to lay on any of us that cross which every Christian must bear at some time or other of his life, "let us remember, if our little misfortune troubles us, that the best of kings and the best of men was publicly murdered by his own subjects;" and let us follow him in the steps in which he followed Christ; that so, having lived the life of this righteous person, our last end may be blessed like his, and that having patiently and cheerfully endured our appointed portion of sorrow in this miserable world, and sent forth our latest breath in expressions of faith and charity, we may be *numbered*, as he is, "with the children of God, and our lot be among the faints."

¹ Taylor's Holy Living, sect. 6.

his precious memory by an imitation of his
 virtues; setting before us and copy-
 ing as well as we can, his unspotted purity,
 his mild temperance, his gentle words, his
 independent affection towards his relations, his
 ready love for his friends, his complete aban-
 donment of his enemies, the truest and most
 right to the church of God. And in the day
 of election, when it shall please our heavenly
 Father to lay on any of us that cross which
 every Christian must bear at some time or other
 of his life, let us remember, if our hearts fail
 us, that we ourselves are, that the best of things
 and the best of men were perfectly united
 in by his own merits, and let us follow him
 in the steps in which he followed Christ, who
 having lived the life of this narrow world,
 our life-end may be short, the best, and who
 having patiently and cheerfully endured un-
 pointed portion of sorrow in this miserable
 world, and left forth our last breath in expec-
 tations of faith and charity, we may be assured
 as he is, "with the children of God, and our
 lot be among the saints."

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
SONS OF THE CLERGY
IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL,
ON THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1762.

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SONS OF THE CLERGY

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL

ON THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1702.

S E R M O N II.

LAMENTATIONS V. 3.

We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.

THE holy Jesus, who came forth from the bosom of his Father to teach us the way of salvation, was himself pleased to go before us in that way. Heavenly was the knowlege in which he instructed us, while in his blessed example we behold every jot and tittle of it realised and consummated in perfect charity. To convince us that the only use of learning is to make men good, and that every article of faith ought to terminate in a duty, the same divine person, who appeared as the well-spring of uncreated wisdom, manifested himself to be the fountain of everlasting love. "Never man spake like this man," and never man *acted* like this man. His doctrine was that God *loved the world*; as a comment thereon, he *gave himself for us*; and therefore laid it down as an axiom in the evan-

gelical philosophy, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive". As he came into the world to proclaim and to shew mercy, so his law was the law of kindness, and his religion the religion of love.

What pleasure then must this day afford to every intelligent mind, with what joy must it fill every Christian heart, when our eyes are blessed with the sight of so illustrious an assembly of persons, bent upon convincing the world of the relation they bear to the Redeemer, by submitting to that test which himself hath appointed—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And as your very attendance upon this occasion is a proof that much of the task devolved upon the preacher is already done to his hand, by the preparation and disposition of your hearts towards the good work which it is his province to recommend to you; so he cannot but feel great comfort and encouragement in the reflection, that his subject is one which needeth not the skill of the orator and rhetorician to amplify and adorn it. It requireth only to be set forth in its native and artless dress:—"We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows."

^a Acts xx. 35.

^b John xiii. 35.

The state here described is one so full of distress and so void of comfort, that we cannot be surpris'd at the effect naturally produced in the minds of the compassionate by the words which describe it. The eye of Heaven seemeth to drop a tear of pity over persons in this condition: the Almighty frequently acknowledgeth himself to be as it were overcome by their cries, and necessitated to take them under his immediate patronage and protection. The same God who, in one verse of the lxxviiith Psalm, is described as gloriously "riding upon the heavens," appeareth in the very next verse, as "a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows^c." "For as his majesty is, so is his mercy^d." "Great is our Lord, and great is his power, yea and his wisdom is infinite^e." But the chorus in which sinners most chiefly delight to join is this: "His mercy endureth for ever^f:" that mercy which employed his infinite wisdom to contrive, and his great power to execute the plan of our redemption; that mercy which relieved the miserable, and thereby laid an obligation upon all men to do likewise.

The poor afflicted orphan, thrown upon the wide world, there to wander without house or

^c Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5.

^d Eccclus. ii. 18.

^e Psal. cxlvii. 5.

^f Psal. cxxxvi.

home, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in pain and sickness; craving of those, who pass by the way regardless of his complaints, and not at leisure to be troubled with his pitiable story, one morsel of bread for the love of Jesus — what is he but a picture of fallen man, cast out of Paradise, and doomed to wander a stranger and a sojourner upon the earth; hungering and thirsting after something that might satisfy his empty soul; incessantly beat upon by cares and sorrows, imploring, for the love of the same Jesus, his daily bread; intreating forgiveness of his sins, and deliverance from evil. But, thanks be to God, the importunity of a petitioner is never complained of by him with whom we have to do. No angry frown bids the sinner be gone from the gate of heaven. There let him relate, at length, the story of his woes. It is as music to him who first “prepareth the heart” of the penitent for prayer, and then “his ear hearkeneth thereto.”

The church, considered in that state in which she was left by the fall and death of the first *Adam*, is frequently represented in Scripture as a widow surrounded by fatherless children. And to her is applicable that apostolical description, “She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and
“prayers

“prayers night and day^a.” In this condition the second *Adam*, the Lord from Heaven, saw her, and had compassion on her: He exhorted her to refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears: He “called her as a woman forsaken and “grieved in spirit, to remember the reproach of “her widowhood no more^b:” She became the spouse of the King of Heaven, and all her children were made the sons of God. In him “the “fatherless found mercy^c,” and he caused this “widow’s heart to sing for joy^d” everlasting hallelujahs to her benefactor and Saviour, her Lord and her God. The persons therefore for whom I am this day an advocate, though unworthy, have a claim to your compassionate regard upon this consideration, which was once the only plea of all the children of *Adam* at the throne of grace: “We were orphans and fatherless, and our mother as a widow.”

This consideration, I say, might prevail in favour of the widows and orphans of those who had been your greatest enemies; which is not the case at present. Even *Nabal’s* objection cannot now be made, were there any here disposed to make it, which I am well assured there

^a 1 Tim. v. 5.

^b Isaiah liv. 4, 6.

^c Hos. xiv. 3.

^d Job xxix. 13.

are not: " Shall I take my bread and my flesh, and
" give them to men whom I know not whence
" they are¹ ?" The husbands and fathers of those
who solicit your charity were not even *strangers*;
they were your " brethren and kinsmen according
" to the flesh." Persons of the best families in the
nation have not disdained to eat the bread of the
church, but have esteemed it an honour to serve
at the altars of their God. The clergy are no
otherwise divided from the laity, than as they
are taken out of them, to be placed in a nearer
relation, by their office, to the common Saviour
of all. A circumstance, which, instead of es-
tranging, cannot but infinitely endear them to
all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

The Redeemer is indeed no longer upon earth
in person, to receive good at the hands of men,
as once in the highly favoured land of *Judea*;
when hungry and thirsty with long fasting, weary
with journeying from place to place, and well
nigh exhausted with his labours for the salvation
of the world, he vouchsafed to eat bread at the
tables of sinners, and asked water to drink of
the woman of *Samaria*. But, says good King
David, " is there yet any that is left of the house
" of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jona-

¹ 1 Samuel xxv. 11.

" than's

“than’s sake?” Are there none left of the house of God, that we may shew them kindness for Jesus’ sake? Although Christ be in heaven, hath he no connections upon earth; no poor relations left behind in the world? The present assembly is a proof that he hath. All the kind expressions, relative to the sons and daughters of affliction, who are styled friends and relations, nay members of the body of our Lord, are more emphatically applicable to the objects of your present attention, the widows and orphans of his indigent Ministers. He who instructeth these ignorant ones, may be said with *Joseph* and *Mary* to educate the child Jesus. He who giveth food and raiment to these needy ones, with *Martha* and *Mary* receiveth and entertaineth Jesus. And he who comforteth these afflicted, refresheth the bowels of Jesus. By such offices of love performed to your brethren and the brethren of the Lord, ye do shew forth a remembrance of him “who though he was rich, yet for your sakes he “became poor, that ye through his poverty might “be rich.” What he said in the character of the good *Samaritan* to the host in whose hands he left the wounded traveller, he saith now to you— “Take care of them, and whatsoever ye spend,

^m 2 Samuel ix. 1.

ⁿ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

“ when

“when I come again, I will repay you°.” For “he
“that hath pity upon these poor, without all
“doubt lendeth unto the Lord; and look what
“he layeth out, it shall infallibly be paid him
“again°.” And, whereas men are wont to
glory in the multitude of their debtors, it is
observable that Christ rejoiceth in the multi-
tude of his creditors, and loveth those best to
whom he oweth most. The clergy therefore
might intreat for your friendly aid in the day
of trouble, for the sake of their Master, had
they no services of their own to plead.

But may I not be allowed to say, they have;
or will it be taken amiss, if I affirm them to
have been your friends and benefactors — friends
and benefactors to all mankind? The sons of
Levi blew the silver trumpets, and caused a joy-
ful noise to be heard. Through their preaching,
the word of salvation sounded forth, and glad
tidings came to the inhabitants of the world.
Who can express the labours and the sufferings
undergone by the twelve illustrious leaders of the
Christian armies, and their immediate followers
when, marching into the field of battle under the
standard of the cross, they overthrew the strong-
holds of Paganism, and effected the conversion

° Luke x. 35.

° Prov. xix. 17.

of the *Roman* empire? Nor hath the faith thus planted at the beginning been under God supported and defended in all ages since, but by the incessant toils of those who from time to time have been called to the exercise of the ministerial office. The sun at his rising hath often found them intent upon their studies for the edification of their people; and the moon and the stars in their courses by night have been witnesses of the fervent prayers put up to the throne of grace, that their instructions might have the desired effect, and the work of their hands be prospered upon them. Millions of souls who, by the pious sermons, the holy writings, the seasonable reproofs, and the kind exhortations of their spiritual guides, were reclaimed from the error of their ways, and led in paths of righteousness to the mansions of glory, are now employed in making those mansions to resound with the praises of their great Creator and Redeemer, who instituted such an order of men, and wrought his wonders of mercy by them. And since there was a *Judas* among the twelve Apostles, whose treason was never accounted any impeachment of the loyalty of the other eleven; nay, since there was a *Lucifer* even among the angels in heaven, whose fall could
never

never be supposed to sully the brightness of them that stood; let not the failings of some be imputed to a whole body of men, who have so evidently been the instruments, in the hands of a gracious God, of bringing many sons to glory. But the benefactions of the clergy have been by no means confined to the church and to the souls of men. They have formerly, with fidelity to their Sovereign, emolument to the public, and honour to themselves, discharged the most important trusts of the state. And the colleges, the hospitals, and the alms-houses by them founded and endowed, with their unnumbered private charities, do abundantly testify them not unmindful (when they had wherewithal) to relieve their poor brethren of the laity; whose kind help and assistance their afflicted widows and orphans humbly hope they may now, in their turn, without offence, solicit and implore.

But the case of the reformed clergy of the church of *England* merits a more particular consideration. For certainly, if to reinstate the Scriptures in their rightful throne, and to place the pure light of evangelical truth upon the holy candlestick; if to clear the faith from the corrupt traditions of men, and to reduce practice from spending itself in idle sopperies and unprofitable

fitable pilgrimages to works of piety and charity; if to free devotion from ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and to render it intelligible, rational, and acceptable to God; if to give to saints the honour due unto them, without robbing the master to adorn the servant; if to pull down the usurpations of human pride and policy, and to exalt the holy Jesus, as head of his church, and justifier of his people; if to restore to the King his subjects and sovereignty, to the laity that cup which is the communion of the blood of Christ, and to all the due and proper use of reason enlightened by revelation in matters of religion; and lastly, if to free the nation from the exorbitant impositions of the court of *Rome*; if there be any merit in all this, the clergy cannot be without their share of it, who preached, and wrote, and suffered, in the cause of the reformation. And in one respect, through an original neglect at that time, they have *suffered* ever since. The tythes of many livings had been seized by the Pope, and appropriated to the maintenance of his creatures in the monasteries, while the person officiating was forced to take up with the scanty pittance which they thought proper to allow him. Upon the dissolution of the monasteries, these tythes, instead of reverting to the parochial priests, whose they were

were by all the laws of God and man, became a prey to the rapacious courtiers of King *Henry VIII.* and King *Edward*. So that the clergy of the Church of *England* obtained indeed at the Reformation the liberty of increasing their families, but were unhappily deprived of the allowance necessary to maintain them. A clergyman, after having spent a little fortune in his education, by the unwearied exertion of all the interest he is able to make, is at length so successful, as to be presented to one of these impoverished vicarages. Perhaps (as is frequently the case) his lot falls in a market-town, where his cure is large, and his income scarce equal to the annual acquisitions of half the tradesmen in it. By canons and statutes he is restrained from improving his revenue by any secular occupation, but yet by the laws subject to a share of the secular burthens. His dues, trifling as they are, will be detained, if he doth not sometimes prosecute for them: and if he doth, he will be vilified and abused; he will be in danger of losing his influence, perhaps of being ruined by the suit. In these circumstances, he is to bring up a family to support the dignity of his character, and it will ever be expected of him, that he should set an example to his parishioners of hospitality and charity. Whoever shall consider what multitudes
of

of those who enter into holy orders have nothing better, if any thing so good as this to expect, will esteem it a singular providence that the daily sacrifice hath not ceased from amongst us, for want of officiating ministers. A desire of doing good seemeth to be the only motive left to induce numbers, destitute of views and interests, to commence preachers of the gospel; since the man would scarcely stand clear of an absurdity who should now make that wretched request, which it was prophesied that the posterity of *Eli* should make, as a punishment for the sins of their ancestors: "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread!"

Here then we are at the source of those miseries, which it is the pious design of this day's assembly to alleviate. They who preach the gospel are not suffered to live of the gospel: and, by the alienation of the tythes from the livings, the case of the parochial clergy in *England* is in reality harder than that of the ministers of any church in the world not under persecution. Therefore is there a voice so often heard in *Ramah*, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; the voice of some one or other

of “ the wives of the sons of the prophets, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen’.” The good man, worn out with study and labour for the benefit of others, is hardly gone to repose in the dust, but his widow is driven from her home, endeared with all its inconveniences by custom, and much more so by the sad consideration, that she hath not now where to lay her head, or wherewithal to satisfy her orphans; while “ the tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask for bread, and no man breaketh it unto them’.” In this situation, she cannot but call to mind those better times, those days of plenty and prosperity, which she once knew in her father’s house, ere she had given her hand to the object of her esteem and affections; who yet standeth chargeable with no crime but this, that, being separated to the service of God, he was of a profession which never put it into his power to provide for her support.—O come that blessed day when these widows tears shall be wiped for ever from their eyes, and the reproach of the married clergy

’ 2 Kings iv. 1, 2.

’ Lam. iv. 4.

be effectually taken off; when the land shall be cleared of these pernicious remnants of *popery*, (for such they are) and the reformation be carried to its full perfection!—Meanwhile the wretched orphan asks only to be preserved alive, and made an useful member of society; and daily bread is the humble request of the desolate widow, whose husband hath so often reached forth the bread of eternal life to the hungry soul: and since yours, my brethren of the laity, since yours hath been the harvest of the Reformation, at least “let her glean among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not:” remembering that which is written in the law of *Moses*—“When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: It shall be for the fatherless and for the widow, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.”

And all the blessings of eternity rest on the heads of those who have successively contributed to the support of this corporation, which was

^a Ruth ii. 15.

^b Deut. xxiv. 19.

erected by King *Gharles* II. and hath since been honoured by repeated instances of royal munificence: to which if we add the bounty of the excellent Queen *Anne*, whose piety towards the clergy will be had in everlasting remembrance, and their children's children call her blessed, for her endeavours, by giving the tenths and first fruits for the augmentation of poor livings yearly, to cut off, in part, the source of their distress, it may indeed be affirmed, and we may and do tell it out with joy and gratitude, that "Kings
" have been our nursing fathers, and Queens
" our nursing mothers." Nor hath this voluntary engagement, entered into by the sons of the clergy for the relief of their poor brothers and sisters, wanted the assistance either of persons of quality and fortune among the laity, or of many illustrious and venerable Prelates, who by *charity*, preferable in the judgment of the Apostle to the power of working miracles, have prevented the poor widow's *barrel of meal* from *wasting*, and her *cruse of oil* from *failing*. By these blessed instruments of his providence and love doth the Almighty address the foreboding and desponding soul of every dying servant of his, in the words of that gracious and comfortable promise:
" Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve
" them

“ them alive, and let thy widow trust in
“ me.”

Happy therefore are all they, who have it this day in their power to imitate the loving-kindness of their heavenly Father, and to copy after the example of the holy Jesus, while they shew their gratitude for the benefits received from him at the hands of his ministers, by contributing to relieve the distresses of their impoverished families. Riches thus expended are returned with increase into the bosoms of the generous; for “ the liberal soul shall be made fat, “ and he who watereth shall be watered also “ himself.” Alms given through faith procure “ deliverance in the time of trouble;” they “ fight for us against our enemies, better than a “ mighty shield and strong spear;” they ascend up for “ a memorial before God,” and bring down the benedictions of heaven upon us; they sanctify to us the whole creation^c in the days of health; they comfort us, when we most need comfort, on the bed of sickness^d; and they follow us whither our estates and possessions cannot^e. “ He who receiveth a prophet

^x Jer. xlix. 11.

^y Prov. xi. 25.

^z Psalm xli. 1.

^a Eccles. xxix. 13.

^b Acts x. 4.

^c Luke xi. 41.

^d Psalm xli. 3.

^e Rev. xiv. 13.

“ in the name of a prophet,” and “ who giveth to
 “ these little ones but a cup of cold water, be-
 “ cause they belong to Christ, shall in no wise
 “ lose his reward^f” in that day, when “ the
 “ merciful shall obtain mercy^g ;” when he who
 hath not turned away his face from the poor
 shall not behold the face of the Lord turned
 away from him^h ; when the widow and the fa-
 therless shall be the ablest advocates, and plead
 with irresistible eloquence in behalf of their
 kind benefactors, whose liberality saved them
 from want and destruction. For lo ! an awful
 silence, and all the attention of heaven and earth
 engaged, while from the throne of judgment
 proceed these gracious words addressed to the
 merciful — “ I was an hungry, and ye gave *me*
 “ meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave *me* drink ;
 “ I was naked, and ye clothed *me* — for, inas-
 “ much as ye did it unto the least of these my
 “ brethren, ye did it unto *me*. Come therefore,
 “ ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom
 “ prepared for you from the foundation of the
 “ worldⁱ. Ye are they which have continued
 “ with me in my temptations^k ; be ye numbered
 “ with my saints in glory everlasting.” — Which

^f Matt. x. 41, 42. Mark ix. 41.

^g Matt. v. 7.

^h Tobit iv. 7.

ⁱ Matt. xxv. 34.

^k Luke xxii. 28.

God grant that we all may be, through the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON II.

God grants that we may be, through the
merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord,
to whom, with the Father and the Holy
Spirit, three persons and one God, be ascribed,
as is most due, all blessing, and honour, and
glory, and power, now and for ever.
Amen.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 1761.

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AT ST. MARY'S

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1788

S E R M O N III.

JAMES II. 24.

You see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

WAS a disciple of the holy Jesus permitted to carve his own lot, and to choose his employment in the world, he would doubtless wish to pass his days, without strife and contention, in the pleasing task of contemplating the love and setting forth the praises of his divine Lord and Master. But this is a felicity reserved for us in a better world, and shall be given to them for whom it is prepared, when the church shall pass out of her militant into her triumphant state. At present she is in an enemy's country; there is *a noise of war* continually in the camp: and every man must have his "sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night:" every minister of the gospel must be armed with the *sword of the spirit*, which
is

is *the word of God*, to combat every error, and put every heresy to flight, that may otherwise take the advantage of those seasons when the church is least upon her guard, to assault and hurt the faith. It has indeed been a maxim sometimes laid down, that false opinions, if let alone, will die of themselves. But surely the gospel and experience teach us another lesson. If *men sleep* while the *tares are sown*, it will cost them many waking hours to root them up when they are grown, besides the great danger there is of rooting up the *wheat* complicated and entangled with them at the same time. And if the master of the house should think it needless to extinguish a fire already kindled and insinuating itself among the beams that compose and support the edifice, he may soon be seen bewailing his unpardonable negligence over its ruins. Should it be asked, who are the proper persons to defend the faith, when it is attacked from time to time, and to state the Christian doctrines aright, as often as they are in divers manners misunderstood and perverted; the answer is obvious — They who by the liberality of founders and benefactors are separated from the cares and concerns of the world, that

that they may attend without distraction upon this very thing, and see, *ne quid detrimenti ecclesia capiat.*

The *solifidian*, or *antinomian* heresy, which asserts, “that man is justified by faith without “works,” and which took it’s rise from a misunderstanding and perversion of some passages in St. *Paul*’s Epistle to the *Romans*, was one of the first that disturbed the Christian church; insomuch that St. *Augustin* says, that not only the Epistle of St. *James*, but likewise those of St. *Peter*, St. *John*, and St. *Jude* were written to guard the faithful against it’s pernicious influences. His words are—“*Contra eam maxime dirigunt intentionem, ut vehementer astruant, fidem sine operibus nihil prodesse.*” Many have been the heresies since, in the composition of which this opinion has been a prime ingredient. But it was in all it’s glory in the last century, and had taken possession of the theological chair in this university, when the incomparably learned Bishop *Bull* entered the lists against it, and encountering it’s ablest champions, gave it a total defeat in that palmary work, the *Harmonia Apostolica*, with it’s defences, styled by Dr. *Grabe*, *the triumph of*

* Aug. de Fid. et Op. cap. 14.

the church of England^b. But as heresies make their periodical revolutions in the church, like comets in the heavens, to shed a baleful influence on all about them, the time seems to be coming when *antinomianism* is to be again rampant among us. And what wonder that this or any other heresy should be introduced and propagated, if men, instead of having recourse to the catholic doctors of the ancient church, and to such of our divines as have trodden in their steps, will extract their theology from the latest and lowest of the modern sectaries, thus beginning where they should end; if, instead of drawing *living water* for the use of the sanctuary from the fresh springs of primitive antiquity, they take up with such as comes to them at second or third hand from the Lake of Geneva: if the spirit of a *Cyprian* exerted in the maintenance of the *vigor Episcopatus* and the constitution of the church be accounted for *bigotry* and *narrowness*; and *Clement* and *Ignatius* pass for but very moderate divines, when compared with the *new lights* of the *Tabernacle* and *Foundery*. Should this method of studying divinity prevail to the exclusion of the other, there will

^b *Nelson's Life of Bishop Bull*, p. 235.

soon be neither *order* left in the *church*, nor *certainty* in the *faith*.

It is by no means my design in the following discourse to endeavour to conduct you through all the windings and foldings of the polemical labyrinth of *justification*. A matter of such importance as man's acceptance with his Maker does not (blessed be God) depend upon nice scholastic subtleties, or fond enthusiastic fancies. It may be settled in a short and easy way, by such plain declarations of scripture as holy men of old were wont to direct themselves by, in those happy times, when no one was accounted a *believer* who was not *virtuous*, and when *faith* and a *good life* were synonymous terms. " Alas, (saith Bishop *Taylor*) the nice-
" ties of a spruce understanding, and the cu-
" rious nothings of useless speculation, and all
" the opinions of men that make the divisions
" of heart, and do nothing else, cannot bring
" us one drop of comfort in the day of tribu-
" lation, and therefore are no parts of the
" strength of faith: nay, when a man begins
" truly to fear God, and is in the agonies
" of mortification, all these new nothings and
" curiosities will lye neglected by, as baubles
" do by children when they are deadly sick.
" But

“ But that only is *faith*, which makes us to love
 “ God, to do his will, to suffer his impositions,
 “ to trust his promises, to see through a cloud,
 “ to overcome the world, to resist the devil,
 “ to stand in the day of trial, and to be com-
 “ forced in all our sorrows.” The proposition
 therefore which I shall undertake to prove, or
 rather to collect and set before you in one
 point of view the arguments by which learned
 men, and particularly the author of the *Har-*
monia, have irrefragably proved it, is that
 evidently contained in the words of St. *James*
 now read to you, viz. that works wrought
 through faith are a necessary condition of our jus-
 tification. “ You see then how that by works
 “ a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

I call works a necessary *condition* of our jus-
 tification, because most certain it is, that the
 only *meritorious cause* thereof is the satisfaction
 of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who
 alone by his most precious blood shed upon
 the cross hath obtained for us remission of sins,
 and eternal life. But in the gospel covenant
 to which we are now admitted by baptism,
 faith and works are the *conditions*, to the per-

^c Bp. Taylor's Sermon styled *Fides formata*, printed in the
 folio edition of his Sermons, p. 43.

formance

formance of which through the power of his grace God has annexed the promises of redemption, and without the performance of which a right to those promises can neither be acquired, nor preserved. That faith is such a necessary condition, all Christians are agreed. That works are so likewise I shall prove — from scripture *testimonies*; from scripture *examples*; from the nature of *faith*; from the nature of *justification*; and from the process at the *day of judgment*: after which I shall shew from St. *Paul*'s own words, that he preaches the very same doctrine with St. *James*; and close the whole with the state of that doctrine given by Bishop *Bull* in the noble confession of his faith in this particular, made by him when on his death bed.

And *first*, That works are a necessary condition of our justification may be proved from plain and express *testimonies* of holy scripture. For thus God by the prophet *Isaiab* enjoins his rebellious people to “cease to do evil, and learn “to do well,” and then promises that though “their past sins were as scarlet, they should be “white as snow^d.” Here, “remission of sins” through the Redeemer is the gift on God's part,

^d *Isai.* i. 16.

“ ceasing to do evil” and “ learning to do well” are the conditions on man’s part. In the same manner the prophet *Ezekiel* informs the sinner, to his great and endless comfort, that if he will “ turn from his evil ways, and make restitution, and walk in the statutes of life,” then “ all his sins that he hath sinned shall not be “ once mentioned.” Our Lord in the gospel calls all sinners to him, that they may “ find “ rest to their souls” in the arms of his mercy forgiving them their trespasses ; but then it is upon *condition* that they “ take his yoke,” i. e. his law, “ upon them, and learn of him, and “ follow him,” as his disciples, in word and deed. “ Ye are my friends,” says he in another place, “ if ye do whatsoever I command you’.” Agreeably hereto it is declared by St. *Peter*, “ that in “ every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.” And St. *John* in like manner instructs us, that “ if “ we walk in light, as God is in the light, then “ have we communion with him, and the blood “ of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all “ sin.” And again — “ Let no man deceive “ you ;” there is therefore some *danger* of our

^e Ezek. xxxiii. 14.

^s Acts x. 34.

^f John xv. 14.

^h 1 John i. 7.

being

being deceived in this point; “he that doeth
“righteousness is righteous¹.” And these tes-
timonies may suffice for the necessity of works
in *general*, as a condition of our justification.

But we must not, upon this occasion, for-
get those scriptures which insist upon the ne-
cessity of the great work of *repentance* in parti-
cular for that purpose. To call men from time
to time to repentance was a part of the employ-
ment of the prophets until *John*, who thus began
his preaching — “Repent, for the kingdom of
“heaven is at hand²,” “bring forth fruits meet
“for repentance³,” i. e. in the language of St.
Paul, “do works meet for repentance⁴.” When
Jesus himself began to preach, it was in these
words: “Repent, and believe the gospel⁵.” With
him accordeth the apostle St. *Peter*, in his first
sermon to the *Jews* on the day of *Pentecost*—
“Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for
“the remission of sins⁶.” And again, in another
sermon afterwards—“Repent, and be converted,
“that your sins may be blotted out⁷,” i. e. that
you may be *justified*. Nor is repentance a single
work, but a complication of many, compre-
hending under it, if it be genuine and sincere,

¹ 1 John vii. 3.² Matt. iii. 2.³ Ibid. v. 8.⁴ Acts xxvi. 20.⁵ Mark i. 15.⁶ Acts ii. 38.⁷ Ibid. xiii. 19.

the following particulars; viz. a true *sorrow* and deep *compunction* of *heart* for sins past; an *humiliation* under the righteous hand of God; an *hatred* and *detestation* of sin; an unreserved *confession* of it; an earnest and importunate *solicitation* for the divine grace and mercy; the *fear* and *love* of God; a *ceasing from evil*, and the *occasions* that may lead to it; a firm purpose of *new obedience*; *restitution* of what hath been unjustly gotten; *forgiveness* of all them who may have trespassed against us; and, lastly, works of *beneficence* and *charity*. These are the plain and easy diagnostics of a true repentance, as that is the best evidence of a man's being an object of the divine mercy, and in the right way to justification.

A *second* argument to prove that works are a necessary condition of our justification may be deduced from the *examples* of holy men of old who were so justified. Of these illustrious worthies we have a long list in the xith chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. Here let us learn what justifying faith is, by seeing what it was and what it did in those heroes of the ancient church proposed to us by the apostle for our imitation. By faith *Abel* offered a sacrifice in *obedience* to the institution of God; *Noah* built

built an ark ; Abraham left his country and kindred, and offered up all that was near and dear to him ; Moses rejected all the pleasures and honours of the court of Egypt, and chose to have his part and portion with the oppressed and afflicted church ; and so of the rest : by faith they overcame the world, vanquished all the affections of the flesh when they stood in the way of duty, manfully resisted the devil, and lived and died in the love of God and their neighbour. They " fought a good fight," they " finished their course," they " kept the " faith," by making it a constant principle of action, and maintaining good works, without which they had assuredly fallen short of the inheritance. In a word, " through faith," as faith the apostle, " they wrought righteousness," and therefore " obtained the promises¹." And if it be true, as most true it is, that without faith they had never " wrought righteousness," it is equally true, that without " working righteousness through faith" they had never " obtained " the promises."

The example that bids the fairest for justification by faith without works is that of the thief upon the cross. But a nearer inspection

¹ Heb. xi. 33.

will soon convince us, that even in that instance, singular as it was, faith came attended by her handmaids, *repentance*, *piety*, and *charity*. For first, without compulsion he made a full *confession* of his own guilt, and his Saviour's innocence—"We receive the due reward
" of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing
" amiss." 2dly, He made an open *profession* of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the king of *Israel*, when he hung naked on the cross, mocked and derided by the *Jews*, and forsaken of all, as an outcast of heaven and earth. 3dly, He *prayed* to him in that character—"Lord, remember me, when thou comest into
" thy kingdom." And lastly, his charity *reproved* and endeavoured to effect the *conversion* of his fellow sufferer—"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And
" we indeed justly," &c. There is a passage upon the subject in one of the fathers so extremely beautiful and apposite to the present purpose, that I cannot help translating it—"The penitent thief performs many offices of religion at the same time. He *believes*, he
" *fears*, he feels *compunction*, and *repents*; he
" *confesses*, and *preaches*; he *loves*, he *trusts*,
" and he *prays*. He is enlightened by *faith*,
" subdued

“subdued by *fear*, softened by *compunction*,
 “shaken by *repentance*, purged by *confession*;
 “he is zealous in his *preaching*, and enlarged
 “in his *charity*; he hopes through *confidence*, and
 “obtains by *prayer*.” Never surely did man
 perform so much in so short a time! And if
 he was not justified by faith *alone*, where shall
 we find an example of one who was? But,

Thirdly, if we consider the nature of *faith*, it
 will appear to be impossible that any man should
 be justified by that *alone*. For if faith can of
 itself avail to justification, it must be either as
 it is an *assent* to the gospel truths, or a *reliance*
 on the gospel promises; for I know of no
 other notion of faith besides these two. Now
 that faith as an *assent* to the truths of the gos-
 pel cannot justify, is agreed on all hands; else
 were the devils justified, whose faith, or belief
 of the truths relating to him who is to be
 their judge, makes them *tremble*, which is
 more than it does to many who profess to
 have it. And then, as to faith as a *reliance*

‘ Multa simul pietatis officia complectitur. Credit, timer,
 compungitur, et pœnitet; confitetur et prædicat; amat, confi-
 dit, et orat. Fide illuminatur, timore subditur, compunctione
 mollitur, pœnitentiâ concutitur, confessione purgatur, prædica-
 tione zelatur, dilectione dilatatur, confidentiâ sperat, oratione
 impetrat. *Arnold. de ultimis septem verbis Domini.*

on the gospel promises, those promises being *conditional*, every reliance must be a delusion which is not founded upon a conscience witnessing the performance of the conditions ; and a reliance that is so founded is the result of *works* wrought through faith. It undeniably follows therefore, that faith cannot *justify* but as it *worketh by love* ; and, consequently, that *works* are a necessary condition of our *justification*.

The same proposition may be evinced, *fourthly*, from the nature of *justification*, which, being a *forensic* term, implies a prisoner at the bar, a law by which he is to be tried, a witness to accuse him, and a judge to pass sentence. Thus, in the case before us, the prisoner at the bar is man ; the law by which he is to be tried is not the law of *Moses*, exacting a perfect and sinless obedience, but that of Christ, requiring repentance and faith, with their proper fruits ; the witness is conscience ; the judge is Christ. Now, no one can be *justified*, unless he be *absolved* by that law by which he is tried ; nor can he be *absolved* by a law, unless he has *fulfilled* it. Indeed, were we to be tried by a law requiring perfect obedience, it is certain no flesh could be

be justified by it, no man being able to fulfil it. But as we are to be tried by a law requiring repentance and faith, with their proper fruits, which now, through the blood of Christ, are accepted and "counted for righteousness," it most certainly follows, that works, *gospel* works, works of *repentance* and *faith*, are necessary conditions of our justification, and that we cannot be justified without them. This consequence cannot be evaded, but by supposing that the gospel is entirely made up of *promises*, without any *precepts*, to the observance of which through faith those promises are annexed; a supposition surely that can be made by no man that has ever read the seven first chapters of St. *Matthew's* gospel.

The *fifth* and last argument to prove that works are a necessary condition of our justification, is drawn from the method of God's proceeding at the day of judgment, as the manner of our being justified will be best seen by the manner in which we are declared to be so at that day. Now, how often is it said in the New Testament, that God shall judge every man according to his *works*, and that *not the bearers* or bare *believers* of the *gospel* any more than of the *law* shall be accounted "just before
" God?"

“ God?” “ We must all stand,” saith the apostle,
 “ before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every
 “ one may receive the things done in his body,
 “ according to that he hath done, whether it be
 “ good or bad.” Our Lord, warning men against
 foolish talking, because “ of every idle word they
 “ must give account in the day of judgment,”
 subjoins—“ for by thy words thou shalt be jus-
 “ tified, and by thy words thou shalt be con-
 “ demned.” And elsewhere he foretels his se-
 cond advent in these words—“ The son of man
 “ shall come in the glory of his Father with his
 “ holy angels, and then shall he reward every
 “ man according to his works.” And some of
 the last words delivered by him to his church
 after his ascension, by the ministration of the well
 beloved *John*, are these which follow—“ Be-
 “ hold, I come quickly, and my reward is with
 “ me, to give every man according as his work
 “ shall be.” But above all, that celebrated
 passage, Matt. xxv. where the process of the
 last day is described, should be engraved as
 with the point of a diamond on the tables of
 our hearts for ever. There we hear the judge
 from his glorious throne, before which all na-

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

” Ibid. xvi. 27.

† Matt. xii. 36.

” Rev. xxii. 12.

tions are assembled to receive their final doom, declaring some to be justified and accepted, because their faith had wrought works of love to him in his poor brethren and members; and others, because their faith had not wrought those works, to be condemned and everlastingly rejected. “Then shall the king say unto them
“on his right hand, Come ye blessed children of
“my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
“you ~~from~~ the foundation of the world. For I
“was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was
“thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a
“stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and
“ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me;
“I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—Then
“shall he say also unto them on his left hand,
“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire
“prepared for the devil and his angels. For I
“was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I
“was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was
“a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and
“ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and
“ye visited me not.” If therefore works wrought through faith are the ground of the sentence passed upon us at the day of judgment, then are they a necessary condition of our justification, of which that sentence is declarative.

Thus

Thus plainly doth it appear from scripture *testimonies*, from scripture *examples*, from the nature of *faith*, from the nature of *justification*, and from the process of the *last day*, that “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Marvellous would it be if, after this, we should find the great apostle of the *Gentiles* preaching a contrary doctrine. But having made our ground good thus far, we shall easily be able, by a short state of that case, to shew that he doth not, but harmonizeth in every respect with his brother apostle.

In the three first chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans*, St. *Paul* undertakes to demonstrate that all who would be saved, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, must have recourse to the gospel of Christ. To evince the necessity of their so doing, he begins with convicting the whole world of sin. In the first chapter he prefers a bill of indictment against the *Gentiles*, setting before them their abominable sins against God, their neighbours, and their own souls and bodies; their idolatry, and their iniquity. But as the *Jew* was always ready to thank God that he was not as the *Gentiles* were, as living under a perfect law given him by God himself immediately from heaven,

heaven, St. *Paul* in the second chapter takes down his pride, by telling him, that the perfection of a law could not be matter of glory, but of shame and condemnation to the transgressors of it; and that this was so notoriously the case of the *Jews*, that through their breaking the law, in which they foolishly made their boast, the lawgiver was dishonoured, and the name of God blasphemed even among the *Gentiles* on that account. Having thus *proved both Jew and Gentile to be under sin, having stopped every mouth by shewing all the world to be guilty* and obnoxious to the judgment of God, the apostle makes his inference in the third chapter — “ Therefore by
“ the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be
“ justified in his sight;” plainly, because all flesh having transgressed the law, all flesh is condemned by it, and therefore men must go elsewhere for justification. St. *Paul* tells them whither they are to go in the following glorious state of that doctrine according to the gospel — “ But now the righteousness of God
“ without the law is manifested, being witnessed
“ by the law and the prophets; even the right-
“ eousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus
“ Christ unto all, and upon all them that be-
“ lieve ;

“ lieve ; for there is no difference ; for all have
“ sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;
“ being justified freely by his grace, through
“ the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; whom
“ God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through
“ faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness,
“ for the remission of sins that are past, through
“ the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at
“ this time his righteousness : that he might be
“ just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth
“ in Jesus. Where is boasting then ? It is ex-
“ cluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : but
“ by the law of faith.” From these premises
the apostle now draws his great conclusion —
“ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified
“ by faith, without the deeds of the law.”
Out of these last words arise two questions,
which being answered, every difficulty will
vanish, and the great truth witnessed both by
St. *Paul* and St. *James* shine forth without a
cloud. The questions are these. First, what
are the *works* here excluded by St. *Paul*, as
unnecessary to justification ? Secondly, what
is the *faith* to which justification is attributed ?

With regard to the first, what are the
works here excluded by St. *Paul*, as unneces-
sary to justification ? the answer is obvious.

They

They are *beathen* and *Jewish* works, whether ceremonial, or moral, performed without the grace of Christ, and set up as meritorious: without these doubtless a man is justified, for it was the impossibility of his being justified by them, which made it necessary that justification should be the gift of God, and brought Christ from heaven to obtain it for us. That these are the works intended by the apostle is undeniably evident from hence, that *beathens* and *carnal Jews* are the persons against whom he is here arguing. Not one word is here against *good works* wrought through *faith* by the *Holy Ghost*, which are as necessary a condition of our justification as faith itself, and made so by this very *St. Paul*, as shall be now shewn, in answer to the

Second question, viz. what is the *faith* to which justification is attributed by him in this place? He shall tell us himself. “In Christ
 “Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing,
 “nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh
 “by love^{*}.” “In Christ Jesus neither circumci-
 “sion availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision,
 “but a new creature[†].” “In Christ Jesus neither
 “circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircum-

^{*} Gal. v. 6.

[†] Ibid. vi. 16.

“ cision,

“ cision, but keeping the commandments of “ God.” Who does not see here that the *faith* to which St. *Paul* attributes justification, in opposition to the *deeds of the law*, is that which worketh by love, is the same with the *new creature*, and implies in it the “ keeping the commandments of God?”

Again. “ Therefore there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” i. e. they are justified. But who are they? It follows — “ who walk not after the flesh, but “ after the spirit,” i. e. who do not the *works* of the flesh, but the *works* of the spirit: doing the *works* of the spirit therefore is the condition of their justification — “ If ye live after the “ flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the “ spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye “ shall live.”

Once more. This same apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. speaking of *faith*, though otherwise ever so sound and right, as disjoined from *charity*, or love, maketh it to be of no value — “ Though “ I had all faith, and have not charity, I am “ nothing.” Faith therefore, all faith, faith in the highest degree, avails nothing unto justification, but so far as it “ worketh by love” to the

² 1 Cor. vii. 19.

³ Rom. vii. 13

“ keeping

“ keeping the commandments.” The most orthodox faith may be without *charity*, and then it will be altogether unprofitable to him who hath it. But there would be no end of citing passages from St. *Paul* to this effect. Let these therefore suffice.

But what shall we say to the case of *Abraham*, of whom St. *Paul* asserts, that “ he believed God, and it was counted to him for “ righteousness?” Why, truly, we have nothing to say, but only this, that St. *James* brings this very instance of *Abraham*, as of one who was justified by *works*. “ Wilt thou know, O vain “ man, that faith without works is dead? Was “ not Abraham our father justified by works, “ when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? “ Seest thou” (and wonderful it is that there should be any one who does not see) “ how faith “ wrought with his works, and by works was “ faith made perfect?” And so, his works being all wrought through *faith*, the scripture was still fulfilled which saith, “ Abraham believed “ God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;” his faith working by love was accepted in Christ Jesus, according to the terms of that *gospel* which “ the scripture preached

“before unto him.” Thus in this instance of the father of the faithful, as in a common centre, are the doctrines of both apostles met: One says, a man is justified by “faith working;” the other, by “working faith;” and this is really and truly all the difference there is between them. What pity then is it that so many volumes should have been written to the infinite vexation and disturbance of the church, upon the question—Whether a man be justified by *faith*, OR *works*; seeing they are two essential parts of the same thing? The *body* and the *spirit* make the *man*; *faith* and *works* make the *Christian*. “For as the body without the “spirit is dead;” and therefore but half the man, “so faith without works is dead also,” and therefore but half the Christian. Nor can any *son of Abraham* be justified otherwise than his *father* is declared to have been—“Faith “wrought with his works, and by works was “faith made perfect.”

I close all with that noble confession made by Bishop *Bull* of his faith in this article of *justification*, and ratified by him just before his death, when he experienced the comfort of having adhered to it through life, steering his
course

course thereby, amidst all the antinomian errors of those fanatic times in which he wrote, to the haven of everlasting rest.

“ I most firmly believe (says this excellent
“ prelate) that as I yield a steadfast assent to
“ the gospel of Christ, and as I work out true
“ repentance by that faith, shaking off, by the
“ grace of God, the yoke of every deadly sin,
“ and devoting myself in earnest to the obser-
“ vation of his evangelical law, I shall obtain,
“ by the sovereign mercy of God the Father,
“ for the merits only of Jesus Christ, his Son,
“ and my Lord and Saviour, who offered him-
“ self up unto the Father a truly expiatory
“ sacrifice for my sins, and for the sins of the
“ whole world, the full remission of all my past
“ sins, be they never so many and great. But
“ then I have no otherwise any *confidence* of
“ my sins being forgiven me, or of my being in
“ a state of grace and salvation, but as by a
“ serious examination of my conscience, made
“ according to the rule of the gospel, there shall
“ be evidence of the sincerity of my faith and
“ repentance. And I believe moreover, that
“ while I bring forth fruits worthy of faith and
“ repentance, and while I not only abstain from
“ those crimes which, according to the gospel,

“ exclude a man from heaven, but do diligently
“ likewise exercise myself in good works, both
“ those of piety towards God, and those of
“ charity towards my neighbour, so long I may
“ preserve the grace that is given me of remis-
“ sion and justification : and that if I die in
“ this state, I am in the way of obtaining by it
“ the mercy of God, and eternal life and salva-
“ tion, for the sake of Jesus Christ. I believe
“ yet that I may fall away ; and after having
“ received the Holy Ghost, as our church
“ speaketh, depart from grace : and that there-
“ fore I ought to *work out my salvation with*
“ *fear and trembling.* I believe also that in
“ the gospel there is pardon promised to all that
“ fall, let it be never so often, so that they do
“ before their death renew their repentance,
“ and do again their *first works* ; but then there
“ is not any where promised to them either
“ space of life, or grace that they may repent.
“ I believe that there is given to some persons
“ a certain *extraordinary* grace, according to
“ the good pleasure of God ; but I account it
“ the greatest madness for any one therefore to
“ presume upon such a grace, or to challenge
“ aught for himself beyond the promises of
“ God, which are made in the gospel. And
“ lastly,

“ lastly, it is my firm belief, that throughout
“ the whole course of my salvation, from the
“ very first setting out to the end thereof, the
“ grace and assistance of God’s spirit is abso-
“ lutely necessary : and that I never have done
“ and never can do any spiritual good without
“ Christ, is my full and certain persuasion.
“ This is the way of salvation which by God’s
“ grace I have entered into, or at least have
“ desired to enter into, which I have therefore
“ chosen, because it is clearly set forth to me in
“ the holy scriptures, and is a trodden and a
“ safe way, which all catholic Christians for
“ *fifteen hundred years* at least from our Sa-
“ viour’s birth have trodden before me. ^b”

God Almighty enable us all to walk in the
same way to the same end; and for this purpose
let us beseech him in those excellent words of
our church, to “ give unto us the increase of
“ *faith, hope, and charity* ; and that we may
“ obtain that which he doth *promise*, make us
“ to love that which he doth *command*, through
“ Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen* ^c.”

^b Apolog. pro Harmon. p. 12. *Nelson’s Life of Bishop Bull*,
p. 463.

^c Collect. for the 14th Sunday after Trinity.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT
ST. MARY'S IN OXFORD,
AT THE
A S S I Z E S,
ON THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1773.

ST. MARY'S

CHURCH

1852

OF THE

DIocese of

ALBANY

S E R M O N IV.

T I T. II. 11, 12.

The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

WERE it required to produce from the Scriptures that passage, which exhibits, in fewest words, the fullest account of the nature and design of Christianity, this is, perhaps, the passage, that should be fixed on for the purpose. Let us therefore survey and examine the striking features of so pleasing a portrait.

It is by no means intended to enter into a discussion at large of the various topics here suggested by the apostle. It will be more advisable to contract our views, and confine them to a single point. It shall be this; viz. the friendly aspect which Christianity, as here represented—and it is here truly represented—bears towards society,

society, and the welfare and felicity of mankind upon earth. In other words, I would wish, by an illustration of the text, to convey to your minds some faint idea of that state of things, which would begin to shew itself in the world, were the religion of Jesus rightly understood, and zealously practised, among men. A view of the Gospel, in this light, will furnish us with proper answers to some objections made by it's enemies, as if it had been useless, nay, even prejudicial to society. An inference will likewise offer itself to the consideration of it's friends, suitable to this audience, and the present solemnity.

St. Paul, then, first declares the origin, universality, and general intent of the Gospel. It was not a production of earth: it came from above; it was *χαρις Θεου*, the *grace*, or *gift of God*. As a Gift, we may conclude it given, like other gifts, for the benefit of the receivers. As the gift of him, who is the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation, it must be calculated to diffuse mercy and comfort among his creatures. Issuing from the God of peace and order, it could never be designed to give birth to wars and tumults. Offspring of that Being, who, as St John tells us, is Love, it could never

ver be intended to produce hatred in the hearts, of which it should take possession. Proceeding from the God of holiness, and of life, it was not designed to be the means of enlarging the empire of sin and death. It came, *σωτηριος*, “bringing salvation,” or deliverance from every enemy; and it came to all, without distinction of sex or age, country or condition. *Επεφανη η χαρις τε θευ η σωτηριος παντι ανθρωποις* it appeared, it shone forth, manifesting itself by it's own splendor, like the day-spring from on high; like the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, free, bright, universal; author of light and life, of joy and gladness; and hailed, as such, by all things in heaven and earth. It appeared, to dispel ignorance, as darkness; and to disseminate knowlege, as light; to inform and instruct mankind; *παιδευουσα ημας*, taking us into training, and putting us under discipline, in the school of a divine Master, who teacheth us to avoid evil, and to pursue good; and who alone can enable us to do either with effect. In this last particular, his school excels all others, with respect to the benefits accruing from it to civil society, in proportion as it is better that men should practise virtue, than that they should speak, or write of it. Mankind, it is true, wanted

wanted a perfect law, or rule of conduct: but this was not all. The perfection of a law would afford small comfort to those who lived under it, if they could not observe it, and must perish for transgressing it. Men stood in need of other things; they stood in need of pardon for their past errors, and a renewal of their powers unto future obedience. Herein is the glory of the Gospel. This is the triumph of “the grace of “God,” which, by the Gospel, “hath appeared unto all men, teaching us (and bestowing the virtues it enjoins) that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present “world.”

Αρνησάμενοι την ασεβειαν, denying, disclaiming, renouncing, forsaking *impiety*; every species of irreligion; either disbelief of a Deity, or mistaken notions of his nature, attributes, providence, and of the manner in which he is to be worshipped; with all the erroneous and abominable practices consequent thereupon: How prejudicial these were to the interests of society, no one can be ignorant, to whom the history of the heathen world is, in any degree, known. And the case must be the same in every age. The actions of men must always take a deep tincture

tincture from the colour of their religious or irreligious principles. He who believes in a Deity, of whatever kind, will endeavour to please, by imitating him : and he who believes in none, like the poor demoniac in the Gospel, easily bursts all other bands, neither can any man hold him.

“ Denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts ” —
Κοσμηαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι dicuntur et cupiditates (says Grotius) *quas major pars hominum sequitur ; ea enim major pars sæpe, in his libris, τὰ κοσμη vocatur nomine.* Worldly lusts, or desires, are desires whose objects are worldly, and by worldly men coveted and sought after, by undue means, or in an inordinate manner, beyond the limits designed and appointed by God and nature. And what is it, but the prosecution of such desires, that fills the world with wickedness and misery ; producing luxury and extravagance among some ; poverty and wretchedness among others ; hateful quarrels and vexatious suits between individuals and families ; ravaging and desolating wars between princes and kingdoms ; factions and tumults in the state ; and, we may add, generally, heresies and divisions in the church, as our apostle has somewhere classed
them

them likewise among the works of the *flesh*^a. Let not vain man, then, under the name and notion of philosophy, insult and revile as a *monkish* and *solitary* principle, that doctrine, on which the Son of God has thought proper to lay the deep foundations of his religion, the doctrine of self-denial. In the present state of human nature, the desires of *self* are frequently the sickly cravings of a distempered being; the gratification of them would only tend to increase and inflame the disease; and therefore, by our heavenly physician, we are, in mercy, enjoined to *deny* them. All that he requesteth of us is, to consult our own happiness, and that of others; “let the desires that are contrary to the commands of the Gospel be examined, and it will be found, that they cannot be satisfied, without hurting human society^b,” and if we are commanded to renounce worldly lusts, it is because they have deluged the earth with sin and sorrow.

From the negative part of the apostle’s description, we pass on to that which is positive. Having “denied ungodliness and worldly lusts,” we are to live, in the first place, *soberly*, σωφρο-

^a Gal. v. 20.

^b Le Clerc on the Causes of Incredulity, Part II. chap. vi.

νοῦ. The noun, from whence this adverb is formed, signifies, one of a *sound mind*, one that is master of himself, having his appetites and passions in due order and subjection; since, of every one of these, if suffered to domineer, instead of obeying, may be said, what has been often said of one of them, that it is a temporary madness. Thus, when the prodigal in the parable is described, as repenting of his profligacy, the expression is, *προς σεαυτον ηλθε*, *he came to himself*. The phrase intimates, that, while engaged in his former course, he was *not himself*. The governing principle had been dethroned, and he had been carried away captive, at the will of his conquerors. The question, therefore, will stand thus; whether they are likely to make the best members of society, who possess the use of their reason; or they, who have lost it?

If we consider sobriety, as implying the regulation of our *appetites*, it supplies us with the virtues of temperance, as opposed to intemperance of every kind, and industry, as opposed to sloth. And where is the state, that would not wish all it's subjects to be temperate and industrious? Look at the generations of old, and consult the ages that are past. Enquire of kingdoms that were once mighty upon earth, and of empires

empires that now live only in the records of history. Ask them, and with one voice they will tell you, that by these virtues they all arose to greatness, glory, and honour ; by their contraries they sunk into ruin, shame, and reproach. Learn we, then, as good citizens, duly to value the religion, that, upon the grounds of true reason, and eternal wisdom, with such persuasive energy recommends and enjoins the practice of these virtues, holding them forth to view, in the example of our Divine Master, and those of his first followers. A glutton, a drunkard, a debauchee, a sluggard, are monsters in the Gospel system. There we see a religion, which is, all over, sobriety and purity, fervour and alacrity. There we find prescribed to us strict temperance always, prudent abstinence often. And why ? That we may not be brought under the power of an appetite, and enslaved to so merciless and unrelenting a tyrant. There we are directed, whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God ; as if the world were one vast temple, and every good man, through the course of his actions, a kind of perpetual officiating priest in it. There none are permitted to be idle ; every one is to be active and diligent in some employment, not only innocent,

cent, but useful to the community. If any do not *work*, it is declared that he should not *eat*; and the portion of the *unprofitable* is said to be with that of the *disobedient*.

But sobriety goes farther. It comprehends the government not of the bodily appetites only, but of the *passions* and affections of the mind. The use of these is, to stir up the soul, and put it upon action, to awaken the understanding, to excite the will, and to make the whole man vigorous and attentive in the prosecution of his designs. He whose designs are right, and who, being master of his passions, can direct their force that way, proceeds like the mariner, who understands his compass, and commands the winds: he raises, or sinks his affections, according to his judgment, and carefully adjusts them to the nature of things: he applies them, with all their energy, to the prosecution of his greatest interest; and makes them militate, with all their force, against whatever might obstruct it. Christianity informs us of the proper objects, on which the passions should be fixed; and enables us to fix them on those objects. It's injunction runs thus—"Set your

^c See Dr. Heylyn's Dissertation on the Passions, in his Theological Lectures, vol. i. p. 61.

“affections on things above;” on objects, in the pursuit of which they may put forth all their strength, and in the enjoyment of which they may acquiesce, with absolute complacency. These are the objects, to which they were originally adapted; and therefore, till possessed of them, they are unquiet and dissatisfied. In vain do they seek their full gratification in things below, in earthly objects, not calculated to afford it; and when they are set upon such, otherwise than in perfect subordination to the better things above, the man becomes a sure prey to disappointment and vexation^d. Upon this principle, the Gospel, in the heart where it is received, moderates and regulates the passions, in their application to terrestrial objects. It restrains the sallies of anger that it sin not, and stops the issues of dislike; it represses insolence in joy, and prevents clamour or despondency in grief: it forbids presumption in hope, and bridles the impetuosity of desire: it permits not fear to transgress the bounds of a prudent caution, and mitigates even courage, which without it becomes a savage ferocity: it balances the mind in every state and fortune; it produces modesty, meek-

^d See this point made out, by a copious induction of particulars, in Dr. *Young's* True Estimate of Human Life.

ness, patience, candour, impartiality; and, out of these ingredients, forms that *sobriety* of character, intended by our apostle. And what is it but this same sobriety, this command of the passions, this self government, that qualifies a man to discharge properly all the relative duties of life; that endears him to a community, and renders him a truly useful and valuable member of society? Destitute of this, what is the world, as agitated by human passions, let loose, without restraint, in their fury, but a troubled sea, with the four winds striving on it for the mastery; where all is froth and foam, noise and confusion!

From that part of man's duty, which regards *himself*, expressed by the word σωφρονως, we pass to that which respects his *neighbour*, pointed out by the term δίκαιως. "We should live soberly, *righteously, or justly*;" that is, according to the proper and original meaning of the word, giving to all their *due*. What that due is, the Gospel hath ascertained, not, like the mere moralists, by a system of rules only, but by infusing a principle, which reduces the law to a compend, and teaches the whole at once, in it's utmost extent. The principle here meant is *charity*, which, when sincere and ardent, needeth not the assist-

ance of precepts and directions, at every turn, but, by it's own nature and force, supersedes, and even goes beyond them all^e. "For this," says our apostle elsewhere, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law^f." It can do no ill, and will do all the good in it's power. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself."—"Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Let every man allow that claim of right in another, which he should think himself entitled to make, in like circumstances. A precept this, which enables every man to be his own casuist, and puts it out of his power to determine unjustly; a precept which should be engraved on every heart, as it was, by the command of the emperor Severus, on his palace, and public buildings; the uni-

^e See Lord *Bacon's* Advancement of Learning, book vii. chap. iii.

^f Rom. xiii. 9.

versal rule of life, the moral directory of the world ! Reflect, what an appearance society would wear, if men acted upon this evangelical principle. In superiors it would be equity and moderation, courtesy and affability, benignity and condescension : in inferiors, sincerity and fidelity, respect and diligence. In princes, justice, gentleness, and sollicitude for the welfare of their subjects : in subjects, loyalty, submission, obedience, quietness, peace, patience, and cheerfulness. In parents, tenderness, carefulness of their children's good education, comfortable subsistence, and eternal welfare : in children, duty, honour, gratitude. In all men, upon all occasions, a readiness to assist, to relieve, to comfort one another².—Can we help exclaiming, with the celebrated author of *the Spirit of Laws*—
 “ How admirable the religion, which while it
 “ seems only to have in view the felicity of the
 “ other life, constitutes the happiness of this¹ ! ”
 —“ How good and how pleasant would it be,
 “ for brethren to dwell together in unity,” under the influence of this celestial principle, diffusing itself through all the members of a community

² See Dr. *Barrow* on the Profitableness of Godliness, vol. i. Sermon II.

¹ *Spirit of Laws*, book xxiv. chap. iii.

from the highest to the lowest, grateful as “ the
 “ precious ointment upon the head, that ran down
 “ upon the beard, even upon Aaron’s beard, and
 “ went down to the skirts of his garment;” cheer-
 ing and refreshing “ as the dew of Hermon, or
 “ that which fell on the mountains of Sion.”

We have considered man’s duty to *himself*,
 and to his *neighbour*: he is to live *soberly* and
righteously. He is also to live *godly*, εὐσεβως.
 The word conveys the idea of every thing that
 relates to the acknowledgement and worship of
 God; of devotion, piety, or of *religion*, properly
 so called, as distinguished from *morality*. Here
 it is, that we must look for the main spring and
 principle of action; for motives to virtue, ca-
 pable of controuling the appetites, regulating
 the passions, and overcoming every obstacle ob-
 jected by self-love to the practice of justice and
 charity among men. “ Godliness, εὐσεβεια, is
 “ profitable unto all things, having promise of
 “ the life that now is, as well as of that which
 “ is to come¹:” and they, who assert religion to
 have been the invention of priests, or politicians,
 to keep the world in order, do thereby confess
 that it is, at least, good for that purpose.

Of human words and actions, highly pernicious to society, how many are there, not cog-

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

nizable at an earthly tribunal! Yet our happiness or misery, in our converse with others, depends upon the regulation of these. Now, implant but a thorough sense of religion in the mind; teach a man always to consider himself as acting, speaking, nay even thinking, under the eye of that Being, who seeth in secret, but will one day reward, or punish openly; you stop the streams at the place of breaking forth, and staunch, at once, the fountain of corruption.

Of crimes that are cognizable by courts of judicature, how few would fall under their sentence, were it not for the obligation, which religion lays upon those persons, to speak the truth, by whose evidence the facts in question must be proved and ascertained?

There is a connection between religion and morality, like that between soul and body, not to be dissolved without the death of the latter. Speculative men may amuse themselves and others with disquisitions on the beauty of virtue, and the relations of things, independently of the will of God, and the motives suggested by the Scriptures. Virtue, without doubt, is beautiful; and there are relations of things, with corresponding duties resulting therefrom. But will these considerations charm to rest the eager appetites and turbulent passions of human nature,

in it's present condition? "As well might you
"think to bind an hungry tiger with a thread."

But observe the firm basis, on which is for ever fixed the morality of the Gospel. How clear in it's principles, how powerful in it's motives!—"We love God, because he first loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. For he that loveth him who begat, loveth him also who is begotten of him." The head of the most unlearned cannot but comprehend the meaning of these few words; and the heart of the most learned must feel the force of them. Such is the *ground* of that charity, which, as we before observed, performeth every duty of social life, and fulfilleth the law. To inculcate and produce in us this heavenly disposition, is the end of the Gospel, and of all it's doctrines. It is deduced in Scripture even from those that may seem to be of the most mysterious and speculative nature; the unity of the divine persons; the divinity and the satisfaction of Christ; doctrines, which cannot, therefore, be denied, or degraded, without removing, or proportionably lessening the most endearing and affecting incitements to the Christian life^k. Indeed, the happy temper,

^k See Dr. *Waterland's* incomparable tract on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, chap. ii.

of which we are speaking, is the natural and kindly effect of the great evangelical truths, when treasured up in the mind, and made the subjects of frequent meditation. The ideas of a reconciled God ; a Saviour and Intercessor on high ; a gracious Spirit, informing our ignorance, purifying our hearts, relieving our necessities, alleviating our cares, and comforting our sorrows—such ideas as these enable us to bridle the appetites of the body, and to calm the emotions of the mind ; to bear with patience and cheerfulness the calamities of life ; they sweeten the temper, and harmonize the affections, resolving them all into one, diversified according to the different situation of it's proper object ; of which *grief* laments the absence, and *fear* apprehends the loss ; *desire* pursues it ; *hope* has it in view ; *anger* rises against obstruction ; and *joy* triumphs in possession¹. Thus religion fixes the heart on it's treasure, in faith without wavering, and resignation without reserve : it draws the affections upwards towards heaven, as the sun does the exhalations of the earth, to return in fruitful showers, and bless the world.

Such, then, is the friendly aspect which Christianity, as represented by the Apostle in the text, evidently bears to the true interests of

¹ See Dr. Heylyn's Discourses, vol. ii. p. 5.

civil society, Yet a noble writer^m has objected it to the Gospel, that by confining a man's views to himself, and his spiritual concerns, it causeth him to slight the social affections, as things appertaining to this world, and of little moment. The reverse, as we have seen, is the truth. A discharge of all the social duties in this world, is, by the Gospel, pointed out, as the way to promote true self-interest, and to obtain salvation in the world to come. For the performance of these duties, the doctrines of Christianity supply new motives; and the grace, which accompanies it, endues us with new powers.

The same noble author complains, that there is in the Gospel no mention made of private friendship. Surely, if it be among those things, that are "lovely and virtuous, and praise-worthy," it is commanded, and will be rewarded. Evangelical principles extend it farther, and cement it better, than all others. The Saviour of the world styles his disciples, *friends*; and, among them, there was one, on account of his heavenly temper and disposition, more peculiarly favoured and beloved than the rest. Christianity procures, for it's sincere professor, the *friendship* of God; and incites him, in imitation of his

^m The Earl of Shaftesbury.

dear Lord and Master, to deserve a more glorious title, than ever adorned the imperial diadem — The *Friend* of mankind.

It is yet again made matter of complaint, by the aforesaid author, that public spirit, or the love of our country, is passed over in silence by the Gospel. That passion for the supposed glory of their country, which led the Romans to carry war into all the kingdoms around them, is not, indeed, inculcated by the Gospel. Had it been so, Jesus, in conformity to his doctrine, must have put himself at the head of the Jewish armies; and it would soon have appeared, that the Son of man came not to save men's lives, but to *destroy* them. If the love of our country signifies a true and affectionate concern for the public good, whither can we go for an example of it in it's highest exaltation, better than to the character of our Lord? He was born for his people; he laboured for them; he preached for them; he mourned for them; he wept for them; he lived for them—and, to crown all, he DIED for them. — And blessed are those servants, whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find to be, or to have been employed, like himself, in endeavouring to promote the temporal welfare of the community, no less than the eternal salvation of individuals,

individuals, by turning their fellow-citizens from sin to righteousness, and bringing them to the knowlege and obedience of the heavenly law. This is a species of patriotism disinterested and unsuspected: applauding angels view it with delight; and by the Lord of angels it will be had in honourable and everlasting remembrance.

The celebrated sceptic, Bayle, had asserted, that true Christians could not form a government of any duration^m. “Why not?” replies Montesquieu—“Citizens of this profession being infinitely enlightened with respect to the various duties of life, and having the warmest zeal to fulfil them, must be perfectly sensible of the rights of natural defence. The more they believe themselves indebted to religion, the more they would think due to their country. The

^m Plotinus, as we are told by Porphyry, desired the emperor Gallienus to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, and to give it to the philosophers, proposing to dwell there himself, with his disciples, and to establish Plato's republic. But though he was much in the emperor's favour, his project met with opposition at court, and came to nothing. Thus philosophy, as Tillemont observes, though patronized by princes, could never, in any age, introduce it's rules even into one city; and Jesus Christ hath established his all over the world, in spite of all worldly opposition from the great and learned.—A republic of *modern deists* and *moral philosophers* would be as great a curiosity as this *city of philosophers* would have been, but perhaps not quite so well regulated. Dr. Fortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 376.

“ principles

“ principles of Christianity, deeply engraved on
 “ the heart, would be infinitely more powerful
 “ than the false honour of monarchies, than the
 “ humane virtues of republics, or the servile fear
 “ of despotic states. And the Christian religion,
 “ which ordains that men should love each
 “ other, would, without doubt, have every na-
 “ tion blest with the best civil, the best politi-
 “ cal laws; because these, next to this religion,
 “ are the greatest good that men can give and
 “ receive.”

The last objection that shall be mentioned, as
 made against the Gospel, relative to the present
 subject—for I fear I begin to trespass upon your
 patience—is one, which is very frequently
 made; and, therefore, ought not to pass entirely
 unnoticed. It is this; that Christianity seems of-
 ten not only to have failed in it's design of remo-
 ving evils from society, but to have been, itself,
 the cause of introducing some of the worst, as it
 has given birth to religious controversies, fac-
 tions, persecutions, wars, massacres, and the like.

The author of *the Spirit of Laws* has returned
 in few words, and in his usual masterly manner,
 the proper answer to this objection—“ To say
 “ that religion is not a restraining motive, be-

^a Spirit of Laws, b, xxiv. chap. i. and vi.

“ cause

" cause it does not always restrain, is equally ab-
 " surd as to say, that the civil laws are not a re-
 " straining motive. It is a false way of reason-
 " ing against religion, to collect, in a large work,
 " a long detail of the evils it has produced*, if
 " we do not give, at the same time, an enume-
 " ration of the advantages which have flowed
 " from it. Were I to relate all the evils that
 " have arisen in the world from civil laws, and
 " civil government, I might tell you of frightful
 " things. The question is not, to know whether
 " it would be better, that a certain man, or a
 " certain people, had no religion, than to abuse
 " what they have ; but to know which is the
 " least evil, that religion be sometimes abused,
 " or that there be no such restraint, as religion,
 " on mankind^p." Nothing can be more judicious
 and solid than this reply, as far as it goes. A
 consideration or two may be added.

The Gospel has not always produced it's pro-
 per effects—Through whose fault has this hap-
 pened? God gave religion, as he gave the earth,
 to man ; that in peace and comfort, he might

* This is the method invariably pursued, in the numerous no-
 vels, and other tracts of Voltaire. When one considers, for what
 end such talents were given, and to what purpose they have been,
 for so many years together, applied——

Quis, talia fando,

Temperet a lachrymis !

^p Spirit of Laws, b. xxiv. chap. ii.

cultivate,

cultivate and reap the fruits of it. Instead of so doing, man lays it waste, and drenches it in blood. Can we blame God, or the earth, or religion? No; to man alone the blame is due: on man alone let it, then, be laid.

The Gospel has not always produced it's proper effects—It was foreknown, it was foretold, that it would not. Nothing has fallen out new; nothing contrary to the expectation of it's divine author, and his servants. Christianity would have all men to be temperate, sober, pure, industrious, meek, peaceable, just, and loving, in which case, paradise would again spring up amongst us, and earth would be a lively image of heaven. In one word, were it perfectly obeyed, it would establish the happiness that is attainable here below; and to it, imperfectly as it is practised, is owing the quietness, security, and good order, that a great part of the world now enjoys.

But, after all, the argument against religion, drawn from the bad conduct of it's professors, though not *conclusive*, will always be *prevalent*; and though many good answers may be given to it, the best of all would be, to forsake our sins, and amend our ways. Our good actions would then speak for us, and wipe off this imputation cast upon our faith. It was a singular honour
and

and advantage to the cause of Christianity, that it's ancient writers, in their apologies for it, could address themselves to the Romans in such word as these—We are grown so many in number, that if we were only to withdraw ourselves from your dominions, we should ruin you; you could not subsist without us. Yet is our innocence as remarkable as our increase. Your jails swarm with criminals of your own religion: but you shall not find there one Christian, unless he be there because he is a Christian, and purely on account of his faith^a. We are not, it will be said, in these days, to expect a return of the golden age of religion. But this may be said, and said with truth, that we know not what may be done, till we have made the experiment; that it is in every man's power to take off his share of the objection; and if every man were to do so, the whole would be removed.

Let us, then, awake—and, from the rising up of the sun, to the going down of the same, call all the world to awake, with us, to righteousness—kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all rulers of the world; high and low, rich and poor, one with another. It is

^a Dr. *Jortin's* Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 169.

righteousness

righteousness which "exalteth a nation;" it is righteousness which "establisheth a throne." Do we desire to live in felicity, and would we fain see good days? Would the prince have the subject loyal and obedient? Would the master have his servant honest and observant? Would the parent have his child dutiful and grateful? Would every man have his friend faithful and kind? his neighbour benevolent and charitable? Let all, without delay, become, in truth, disciples of the holy Jesus, and take away his reproach among men, by studying to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." But, chiefly, we of the clergy, who are ordained to the ministration, and set for the defence of the Gospel; we, who are stationed in these illustrious and far renowned seminaries, that have long been the delight of the nations, and a praise in the earth; here to behold the future ornaments of their country, and protectors of it's establishment, growing up under our care—we are more especially obliged to shew forth, not only with our lips, but in our lives, the praises of him, who hath brought us to his marvellous light; and appointed us to publish the glad tidings of his salvation to the sons of men. Religion, bad as the times were supposed and feared

to be, hath not wanted friends, among the governors of Israel, who willingly offered themselves to stand forth in her cause. The fences of the vineyard have been happily secured. Let the vine yield it's produce, grateful to God and man; that while some are as "plants grown up in their youth," others may "bring forth more fruit in their age."—"So let thy work, O Lord, appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy work."

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL
OF THE
ASYLUM FOR FEMALE ORPHANS,
ON MAY 19, 1774.

S E R I E S

REACHED IN THE MORN

ASYLUM FOR FEMALE ORPHANS

4771 501 TAM 80

S E R M O N V.

ACTS XX. 35.

It is more blessed to give, than to receive.

THE words are cited by St. Paul, as those of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. They occur not in any of the gospels, but descended, as we may suppose, by tradition, from the persons, to whom they were originally addressed. The truth contained in them was deemed too important to be forgotten, and the apostle was therefore commissioned by Providence to gather up this precious fragment of the bread of life, that it might not be lost.

The virtue which we are now assembled to contemplate, in order to practise it, is often by our Lord and his disciples enjoined as our duty. In the passage now read, it is recommended, as our interest ; our present, no less than our future interest.

It hath been justly observed concerning those

passages in the gospel, which dictate abstinence and self-denial, that their import is only this: "Do thyself no harm." With equal truth and propriety may it be affirmed of the precepts relative to the subject before us, that they all terminate in the following most wholesome piece of advice, "Do thyself good:" do good to thyself, by doing good to others. Felicity is the daughter of beneficence; and he who makes his neighbour happy, is always, himself, the happier man of the two. There is a more heartfelt satisfaction, a more solid comfort, a more lively and lasting joy in bestowing, than there can be in accepting relief. "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." A nobler maxim, surely, was never propounded, to influence the conduct of the human race. Were the experiment universally made, it would universally succeed; the unequal distribution of Heaven's favours would no longer be complained of; the days of Eden would return upon earth; and the next life begin in this.

It is impossible to place our subject in a more advantageous light; a light, in which, perhaps, it hath been less frequently viewed. Permit me, therefore, to prosecute so engaging and promising a speculation; since, if duty and
pleasure

pleasure can be brought to coincide, all difficulties are solved, and the controversy is for ever at an end.

Happiness is man's aim, from his birth to his death. But, amongst the men of the world, the question still remains to be answered, "Where shall it be found, or where is the place thereof?" The earth and the sea have been ransacked for it; but they say, it is not in them. The high born sons of ambition, the low minded children of avarice, and the giddy votaries of dissipation, return from the chace, jaded and disappointed. A phantom appeared to delude them, as they will all tell us, in their more serious moments, which fled as they pursued, and vanished when they approached to embrace it. Let us point out to them a more excellent way; let us bring them in sight of something real and substantial; let us prevail upon them to seek happiness by doing good. They have in vain attempted to become blessed by receiving: if they would become indeed so, it must be by giving.

Strange as this position may, at first sight, appear, it is evidently intimated to us, by the operation of that principle implanted in our nature, which we commonly style instinct.

Consider the toil and the solicitude undergone, the anxious days and the wakeful nights passed by the tender parent, in the care of her infant offspring. Yet even here, though so painfully employed, will she not tell you, she experienceth a joy, for which the whole world, if offered in exchange, would be instantly rejected with disdain? Her charge, feeble and helpless as it is, can make her no returns. Only she procures ease and comfort for her child; and its happiness constitutes her own. Such are the objects relieved and supported by us. They are, in some sort, our work, our production, our adopted children, the creatures we have, as it were, formed, and to whom, under God, we have restored life; life, which must otherwise have been dragged on, or lost, in misery and sorrow.

Thus, again, with regard to every connection friendship induces us to form in society, we seek not the satisfaction alone of being esteemed or beloved, but that of exciting in another the sentiments which delight ourselves. The end of the affection is, to render it's object happy, and so to be happy by reflection.

Whence that general wish in every civilized person, to make himself agreeable to those around him, and recommend himself to their
good

good opinion? It is a tacit acknowledgement, that we must please others, if we would be pleased ourselves.

To what end serves that passion in the human breast, which causes us to sympathize with sorrow, and moves our bowels within us to yearn over distress? It affords us, in our own feelings, a demonstration of the proposition contained in the text. It forces us to seek for blessedness in liberality. It inflicts misery upon us, till we have alleviated that of our brother.

The inequality of mankind, ordained by Providence for this end, among others, offers to us continually the opportunities of thus becoming happy. We are unhappy, because we neglect to seize and improve them; since it is an incontrovertible truth, that as no man was ever happy, while employed in making others miserable; so no one was ever miserable, while employed in making others happy; and he was a wise as well as a good prince, who declared the day to be lost, that was not marked in the calendar of beneficence. To his character the imperial diadem could add no dignity.

With the advantages possessed by different persons it should be as with the commodities produced by different countries; the abundance
of

of one should supply the necessities of another. God formed the human heart to be the dispenser of blessings, which are sure to return to it again, in the course of circulation. He made man for society, and designed not that he should be happy, alone.

We may be convinced, by a little reflection, that the gifts of Heaven, poured in ever such profusion around him, cannot make him so. Self is an idol, that can contribute no more to its own well-being, than the idols worshipped of old. Take a man out of the world, place him in solitude, and you will see, that all the supposed sources of felicity fail at once. Invest him with power : there are none on whom it can be exercised. Fill his treasury with gold and silver : they have lost all their value. Let him possess the highest reputation : there is no one to regard it. Bestow upon him the abilities of an angel : they will prey upon themselves, for want of other materials. Adorn him with every accomplishment : every accomplishment will be useless. Nay, of piety itself, practised only in solitude, it has been remarked by an elegant writer, that, “ like the flower
“ blooming in the desert, it may give it’s fragrance to the winds of heaven, and delight
“ those

“ those unbodied spirits, that survey the works
“ of God and the actions of men ; but it be-
“ stows no assistance upon earthly beings, and
“ however free from the taints of impurity,
“ yet wants the sacred splendour of benefi-
“ cence.” The gifts of God, unless diffused to
others, become unprofitable to the owner. To
be enjoyed, they must be communicated, and
taken upon the rebound.

Let us now, therefore, conduct our candidate
for happiness back into society, with his posses-
sions and talents, and let us shew him, how he
must employ them, for the attainment of his
end. They *may* be employed to the prejudice,
they *should* be employed for the benefit of his
fellow-creatures, or he will live and die in a
state of disappointment and vexation.

Power, by the little satisfaction it otherwise
affords, will quickly convince him to whom it
has been committed, that it was not given to
gratify himself at the expence of those under his
command, but to be exercised for their advan-
tage. Heroes were thought, of old, to be the
sons of the Deity. But he did not send them
from above, to seize and divide kingdoms, to
ravage provinces, to sack towns, and destroy the
unfortunate. They came to relieve misery, to
succour

succour distress, and to be a blessing to their fellow-citizens and countrymen. Sometimes, indeed, they could not become such, but by resisting and vanquishing their common enemies. But the glory of conquest is always stained with blood. It can only be acquired by carnage and death. Many may rejoice and triumph; but many must mourn and be undone. Glory, pure and spotless, is that which results from felicity procured and bestowed. This is to conquer hearts; and to conquer *them*, is to reign indeed. Government cannot stand on a firmer basis, than the love of the subject. It is at the same time the security and the comfort of the prince; his shield and his reward*.

Wherein consisteth the happiness attendant on wealth? In the toil with which it is acquired? As reasonably might we search after it in the mines, or in the galleys. In contemplating it, when acquired? The world itself, for once, passes a right judgment, and despiseth the wretch who seeks it there. In hazarding it at the gaming table? The pleasures afforded by the rack are as eligible. The discipline

* See the admirable essays of the late good king Stanislaus, printed at Paris, under the title of *Le Philosophe bienfaisant*, from whence many of the sentiments in this discourse are taken.

of eastern hermits was mild and indulgent, compared with the pains and penances, the anxieties and horrors, with which those vigils are kept. In procuring the means of riot and excess? But they prey upon the strength, and depress the spirits. If the rich man would enjoy a sound mind in a healthy body (and who can be called happy that doth not?) he must live like the poor man; he must attain and preserve them by temperance and exercise, that is, by labour and abstinence, abstinence from food of such quality, and in such quantity, as his appetite would provoke him to take down. What advantage, then, you will say, have the rich? And are they not, after all, happier than the poor? Undoubtedly they are; and for this reason—because “it is more blessed “to give, than to receive.”

We are told of a philosopher, who threw his money into the sea, lest it should corrupt its master. The action has been much applauded, but it may be questioned whether it afforded any proof of his proficiency. Rightly used, others might have been the better, himself the happier, and not the less virtuous, for it.

On a like principle, for many centuries, numbers of Christians, in order to be perfect, left all,

all, and retired into the wilderness. Indeed, in those dreadful days, when, under the heathen emperors, the furnace of persecution was heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated, we can blame none who endeavoured to get out of the reach of such tremendous flames. What began by necessity, was afterwards continued by choice. To avoid a defeat, the soldiers of Jesus betook themselves to flight. But, surely, the Christian hero should engage and conquer. He who is furnished with the ability to do good, should continue in the world, where good is to be done. The man of opulence, what is he but steward to the sovereign Proprietor of all things? It cannot be his duty to forsake those of the household over which he is placed; and it should be his delight to take care of them. God grudges him not the necessaries, the conveniences, the comforts of life for himself; but only directs him, wisely and graciously directs him, to promote his Lord's glory, and his own happiness, by extending his concern to all around him. He who, in such circumstances, will not be persuaded so to do, should recollect, that the hour is coming, and must soon come, when it shall be said unto him, by a messenger, who will admit no excuse, and brook no delay, "Give
" an

“an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.”

The talents of the mind, whether natural, acquired, or infused from above, stand on the same foot with power and riches. They are given, as an apostle informs us, “to profit withal;” to profit others; to lead men into the paths of wisdom and virtue, of religion and piety. Genius and learning, employed, for a long course of years, in seducing the minds of men to infidelity, and exciting their passions to vice, afford but a melancholy retrospect to declining age. The bitterest reflection we can have to make in our last hours, is this, that mankind are the worse for us; next to it is the reflection, that they are not the better. Wouldst thou, then, be blessed *in* thy mental endowments? Take care that thy brethren be blessed *by* them.

Thus hath God ordained it to be, in every instance. Nor can it be otherwise, if the blessedness of man consisteth in a resemblance of his Maker. He is himself the most beneficent of beings, and he is the happiest. He giveth all, and he can receive nothing, but the humble acknowledgements, the grateful praises of his creatures. He openeth his hand, and filleth all things

things living with plenteousness. The eyes of all wait upon him, the whole family in heaven and earth looketh up to him for a supply of every want, and he giveth them their food in due season. He clothes the pastures with flocks, the hills with woods, the gardens with flowers, and the vallies with corn. By him, through him, in him, we live, and move, and have our being. Power, riches, and wisdom are his, and they are all exerted for the good of man. He is mighty; but he is mighty to save: his riches are the riches of mercy and grace: and his wisdom plans our welfare. He would have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth. He is pleased to represent his own happiness as depending on that of his people: he is described as rejoicing, when it is well with them; as grieving, when it is otherwise.—Can the book, which so describes him, be other than divine?

If the glory of the Godhead be too dazzling an object for the eyes of frail mortality stedfastly to behold, view that glory veiled in human nature. Consider the author and finisher of our salvation, Christ Jesus. He gave himself for us. He came down from heaven to give life to the world, from which he received only persecution,

tion, sorrow, pain, and death. Yet the delight afforded him by his employment was an overbalance for all his sufferings. It was his refreshment, and his support, through the course of his pilgrimage. "My meat," saith he, "is to do my father's will, and to finish his work." He "went about, doing good." His life was ever active, and ever useful. Living, he preached, wherever he came, the doctrine of salvation; dying, he bore his last testimony to its truth. For the suffering of death crowned with honour, invested with all power, and seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, like his bright representative in the firmament, he diffuses light and life unto the ends of the earth; he reigns and shines for the benefit of the world: and, in so doing, he is pronounced and proclaimed, by every creature, *blessed* for evermore.

The considerations which have been offered, may, it is humbly hoped, suffice to evince the truth of the proposition in the text, and to demonstrate, that felicity is the offspring of beneficence. The *properties* of this felicity will deserve your notice.

It is *immediate*. The husbandman, in this case, waits not, as in others, a long season, for

his harvest. In sowing he reaps. Nay, the very desire of doing good, the very first thought of that kind, which springs up in the soul, brings with it its own abundant reward; it produces a pleasure unknown to those, who erect their happiness on the misery of others, or who make the happiness of others a source of misery to themselves.

It is *exquisite* and *unalloyed*. It is the only pleasure attended and followed by no satiety and disgust, no trouble, no bitterness, no remorse, no repentance. Our bounty, you will say, perhaps, may be ineffectual, or its objects may prove ungrateful. Ingratitude may diminish its value to the receiver, but not to the giver: he has done his best, and his work is with his God, who causes the sun to arise, and the rain to descend on the fields of those that acknowledge him not.

It is *secure*: it may be called one's own. A stranger intermeddleth not with it, to disturb it; the thief cannot break through, and steal it away.

It is *durable*. Mere earthly felicity of every kind, even the most innocent, like other terrestrial productions, involves in it the seeds of its own dissolution. There is a leaven in the lump,
that

that will sour and corrupt it ; there is a worm in the gourd, already at work to corrode and consume it. But the happiness now recommended to you never wastes, nor diminishes ; it increases in the enjoyment ; it renders other pleasures needless, and supplies their place, growing every day more and more satisfactory and delightful ; but most of all will it be found so in that day (not far from every one of us) when a solemn leave must be taken of the world, and its most celebrated pleasures ; when all we have received must be parted with, and that alone will remain with us, which we have given away. Happy *then* the man, whose faith has been to him a tree of life, yielding this, its proper fruit ; whose love of God has been evidenced by the love of his neighbour ; who has lived not for himself, but for all that needed his assistance. He shall welcome with cheerfulness the hour which appals the mightiest sinner, and strikes terror into the breast of the unprofitable servant. At that hour, with holy hope, and humble confidence, he will lift up his eyes toward heaven, and say—Redeemed by thy blood, and separated from the pollutions of the world by thy spirit, in thy name, and through thy grace, I have made it the business of my life to

shew kindness to others, even as thou hast shewn kindness to me. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and think upon me for good. Lord, pardon my transgressions, and receive me to glory! What is the felicity, the empty, fleeting shadow of felicity, furnished by the possession of crowns and sceptres, palaces and kingdoms, compared to that of him, who, with these sentiments, is passing from time into eternity!

Let me therefore congratulate you on the opportunity, this day offered, of attaining what the world can neither give you, nor take from you. These candidates for your kindness, by the very circumstance of their being such, have it in their power to contribute more to your happiness, than it is possible for you to contribute to theirs.

In passing through the streets of this spacious and magnificent metropolis, the mart of nations, and the emporium of the globe, there is no sight so pleasing, as that of the numerous and noble edifices rising on every side of us, for the reception and relief of poverty and misery; all the fair daughters of divine Charity, and each admirable in its way. "Many daughters have
"done virtuously, but THOU" — if it be invidious

dious to say, “excellest them all,” though “charity envieth not”—at least we must say—the experience of sixteen years warrants us to say it—art equal to any, in the selection and management of those, who are so fortunate as to be the objects of thy care!

They are such, as have, on all accounts, an indubitable claim to our compassionate regard. Deprived of every parental aid, both father and mother had forsaken them, when the Lord Almighty, the father of the fatherless, by your means, took them up, and supported them. Destitute of any abode upon the earth, wide and extensive as it is, your bounty provided for them a comfortable habitation; hungry and thirsty, you fed them, and gave them drink; naked, you clothed them: exposed continually to the wiles of those emissaries of the Destroyer, ever watchful, and ever busy, who sleep not, unless they have betrayed unwary innocence to prostitution, profligacy, shame, disease, and death, you snatched them, with an angel's hand, from ruin, and conducted them to a little Zoar, where their souls might live. In danger of every evil, into which idleness and ignorance could render them liable to fall, you employed and instructed them; employed them in the

principles of that religion, which alone can make them faithful; that religion, which not only teaches, but infuses into its true disciples the virtues of humility, modesty, meekness, patience, temperance, truth, and honesty. Happy they, who are thus qualified and disposed to serve; happy the family, which hath such to serve it; in these days more precious than gold; yea, than much fine gold. Having been well taught, themselves, they will be able to teach others also, and their fellow-servants may receive everlasting benefit from them; nay, let it not be forgotten, that the general of the Syrian armies was, by a servant maid, directed to a prophet, and induced to worship the Lord God of Israel. Our institution, in a word, seems to have been formed after the model of that heavenly love, displayed, by the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, to lost mankind. He found *them* as fatherless children, the outcasts of Paradise, in a state of utter destitution. He opened for them a house of refuge: he fed them with celestial food: he gave them the water of life to drink: he clothed them with the garments of salvation: he instructed them in the way of righteousness: he trained them to obedience, and took them into his own service,

which

which is perfect freedom, and leads to perfect bliss. How pleasant a thing it is to behold an assembly united as one person in the furtherance of so godlike a work ! Wearied with the din of politics, and the noise of folly, here the soul rests and expatiates, as in her proper element. Councils and senates may bestow applause, but scenes like this administer comfort. Those may compliment the head, but these do honour to the heart. In the heraldry of heaven, goodness precedes greatness ; and the patronage, so early, and with such effect, vouchsafed to the **ASYLUM**, affords an illustrious instance upon earth, where the latter glories only in becoming instrumental to the former, esteeming it **MORE BLESSED TO GIVE, THAN TO RECEIVE.**

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 Apostle, affords an illustrious instance upon
 earth, where the latter glories only in becoming
 instrumental to the former, offering a more
 blessed to give, than to receive.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT
ST. MARY'S IN OXFORD,
AT THE
A S S I Z E S,
ON THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1775.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S IN OXFORD.

AT THE

A S S I N E S

ON THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1712.

S E R M O N VI.

1 SAMUEL II. 30.

Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

WHEN we peruse the instructive page of history, we behold empires in the world, like waves in the ocean, successively rising and disappearing again. Exalted for a moment, one glitters before our eyes in power and majesty; but is suddenly overwhelmed and absorbed by the superior force of another; which, itself, perhaps, hardly stays to be gazed at, but as quickly vanishes from the sight, and is no more. In silence we contemplate the affecting scene. We adore the providence of him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men; who putteth down one, and setteth up another; ordering all things according to the counsel of his own will.

From the sacred Scriptures we learn what that will is, and how gracious an aspect it always bears towards the servants of the true God.

We

We see the most untractable of things and persons secretly working together for good to them that fear and worship the Creator of the universe. We perceive the potentates of the earth becoming subservient to the kingdom of Messiah, and carrying on the dispensations of mercy and judgment towards his people, as their obedience, from time to time, pleads for the one, or their transgressions call for the other. Our hearts are filled and warmed with a sense of his goodness, who causeth the world and all that is in it to conspire in promoting the felicity of his chosen.

Considered in this light, let us take a view of the divine œconomy in the government of the world from the beginning, by an induction of those particular facts, together with the grounds and reasons of the same, with which we are furnished by history, sacred and profane. Such a view, it is humbly hoped, will not be an unpleasing employment of the time usually allotted upon these occasions. It cannot be an unprofitable one; since, by studying the ways of him who is perfect in knowledge and holiness, we shall best learn to rectify and regulate our own. And it will be found peculiarly adapted to answer the end proposed by the wisdom and piety of our ancestors, when they ordained, that the solemn
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administration of justice should commence with due and devout meditation on the proceedings of that Being, concerning whom it is said, that, as mercy and truth go before his face, so righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

A large and comprehensive, that is, a proper survey of the great scheme of Providence, as formed upon the maxim laid down by God himself in the words of the text, must take it's rise from that gracious purpose of saving mankind and bringing them to glory, which appears to have possessed the first place in the designs of Heaven. This we learn, from the notices, afforded in the Scriptures, that we are "saved
" and called according to the divine purpose,
" and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the
" world began^a;" that "God hath chosen us
" from the beginning^b;" that the Lamb of God was slain, that is, intentionally and virtually slain,
" from the foundation of the world^c."

The world was enjoyed but for a little season by man in a state of innocence, and hath ever since sympathized with him in the misery of his fall. But it is still preserved, as the theatre on which the mighty work of Redemption is car-

^a 2 Tim. i. 9.

^b 2 Theff. ii. 13.

^c Rev. xiii. 8.

ried on, until that work shall be accomplished. When "the fulness of the Gentile shall be come in, and all Israel shall be saved," then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

Ere we have proceeded far in the most ancient and authentic of histories, we meet with a stupendous representation of that final destruction which awaits the present system, as well as of that complete salvation which shall be effected for the servants of the most High. The earth was defiled by the abominations of it's inhabitants. The sins of men burst the fountains of the great deep, opened the windows of heaven, and called forth a deluge of water to cleanse it from it's corruptions; when neither the riches of the wealthy, nor the power of the mighty, nor the wisdom of the wise, could avail to preserve them from the hand of death. Then appeared the incomparable preeminence of religion, the inestimable privileges of the faithful. Safe under the protection of the Almighty, the holy family in the ark survived the storm that laid the world in ruins, and passed in perfect security

^a Rom. xi. 26.

^c 2 Pet. iii. 10.

over the wreck of universal nature. A new earth, as it were, arose out of the waters. The covenant was renewed. Men were commanded to look upon the bow in the clouds, and to remember the promise. The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.

Behold those ancient fathers of our faith, the patriarchs, because iniquity again abounded, called forth from their country and their kindred, to preserve true religion upon earth, "till the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made." "They were but few men in number, yea very few, and strangers in the land." But the presence of God was with them. "He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." They were honoured in the kingdoms through which they travelled. When injured, they by faith "put to flight the armies of aliens." They were permitted to intercede for cities; and when destruction became inevitable, yet such as belonged to *them* were sent out of the overthrow. They became instruments of preserving whole nations alive in the time of dearth. They informed princes concerning the will of heaven,

¹ Ps. cv. 12.

and taught senators true wisdom. They were revered by crowned heads, and Pharaoh disdained not to receive a blessing from Jacob.

Egypt, a kingdom, in those days, the most renowned of all others for power and learning, became a scene of very remarkable transactions. The sighs and groans of afflicted Israel came up before the eternal throne. The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and made bare his arm in the defence of his people. The persecutor still withstood that power which controuled all the operations of nature; and hardened his heart against that goodness, which, by so doing, called him to repentance. At length, the jaws of oppression were broken, and the people of God were delivered. The Egyptians sank, like lead, in the mighty waters; while Israel, triumphant on the opposite shore, sang hallelujahs to the Lord God omnipotent.

The descendants of faithful Abraham, thus brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, were conducted through the wilderness, the same Lord being their light and their strength, their support and their comfort; and came to the borders of Canaan, at the precise time, when the iniquity of the Amorites was full. The day of trial allotted to the idolatrous

trous nations being expired, a gloomy and tempestuous night closed upon them for ever. The judgment determined in the decrees of heaven was executed by the sword of God in the hand of Joshua. The promise was made good—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The power of faith prevailed, to the casting down of strong holds; and the blast of trumpets, founded by the divine command, was found sufficient to level the walls of Jericho.

As often as the children of Israel, after their establishment in Canaan, rebelled against the Lord their God, he punished them by means of the neighbouring nations. When they returned to him, his favour returned to them; the light of his countenance soon dispelled the darkest clouds of public calamity, and brake forth upon them, by means of deliverers, raised up to chastise the insolence of their enemies, and to restore tranquillity and happiness in the dwellings of Jacob.

The prosperity of Israel was at it's height in the days of Solomon, to whose court we see the sovereigns of the earth resorting, astonished at his glory, charmed and edified by his wisdom. Jerusalem was the praise of the nations, and the joy of the whole earth. Peace resided within her

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walls, and plenteousness within her palaces ; while, in the midst of her, on the favoured mount, shone, like the sun in the firmament, the house of the Lord her God, where he was worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Let us contemplate the noble idea, intended, surely, to be conveyed by this reign, of the state of things which is to take place, when the last enemy shall be vanquished, and death swallowed up in victory ; when the Son of David shall manifest himself in the new Jerusalem, as the prince of peace, and reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

After this period, we find the Almighty employing, in their turns, the celebrated monarchies of the world, to protect, or to annoy, to cherish, or to chastise his people, or each other, as there was occasion.

The idolatries and iniquities of the ten tribes, consequent upon their defection from the house of David, and the service of the temple at Jerusalem, called for vengeance. And lo, the Assyrian stands in readiness to execute it, awaiting, as it were, his orders from above. At the time appointed, they are issued. The Lord lifteth up an ensign to the nations from afar, and mustereth the host to the battle, making them
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the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land. Because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and followed other Gods, therefore the Lord was angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. They returned no more to that pleasant land, nor saw again their native country.

The case of the Assyrian affords a remarkable instance of the manner in which God uses the instrumentality of man's free choice foreseen, and thus causes all the machinations of worldly politicians to work together for the accomplishment of *his* designs, while they attend only to the furtherance of their own. For thus God has been pleased to state this matter, once for all, by his prophet Isaiah. "The
" Assyrian is the rod of mine anger, and the
" staff in their hand is mine indignation. I
" will send him against an hypocritical nation,
" and against the people of my wrath will I
" give him a charge to take the spoil, and to
" take the prey, and to tread them down like
" the mire in the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth
" not so, neither doth his heart think so; but
" it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations

“not a few^s.” The proud Assyrian knew not (what Isaiah could have told him) that Jehovah, having performed by his hand the work of correcting a rebellious people, would afterward punish likewise his own stout heart, and the glory of his high looks^b: He perceived not the absurdity of the axe presuming to boast itself against the person that heweth therewithⁱ. View him before the walls of Jerusalem, at the head of an army supposed to be invincible, opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, and already rioting in the fancied spoil of the holy city. But the time was not yet come. A prince filled the throne, who knew whither to recur for assistance, and possessed the valuable secret of engaging Heaven on his side. Therefore, “the virgin, the daughter of Sion, despised the tyrant, and laughed him to scorn;” “the daughter of Jerusalem shook her head at him^k.” Suddenly, at midnight, without noise or violence, the flower of the Assyrian army is cut off at a stroke. The Almighty puts his hook in the nose, and his bridle in the lips of the raging monster, and leads him back, like a wild beast taken in the toils, contemned

^s Isa. x. 5, 6, &c.

^b Ib. ver. 12.

ⁱ Ib. 15.

^k Ib. xxxvii. 22.

and

and hissed at by those who had so lately trembled at his power.

But, at length, the hour arrived of Judah's chastisement. The transgressions of her kings, of her priests, and of her people, had made the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint. She was to drink deep of the cup of the Lord's fury, and the haughty Nebuchadnezzar was the person appointed to administer it. Jerusalem is laid in ashes, and her children go into captivity. In the school of affliction they are taught the lesson of repentance. "By the waters of Babylon they sat down, and wept;" wept over their calamities, and the sins which occasioned them; "yea they wept, when they remembered Sion;" when they remembered what she had been, and considered what she then was. Desolate, and forsaken, she now sits upon the ground, who was once exalted above the nations; she calls to the whole world, to every people in every age, "See if ever there was sorrow like my sorrow¹, and learn wisdom by my fall."

Yet, even here, God left not himself without witness, nor his people without honour, in the land of the enemy. The irresistible monarch,

¹ Lam. i. 12.

almost ready to propose himself as an object of worship, is seen prostrate at the feet of a captive Jew. Daniel is exalted to power, and a prophet rules in the province of Babylon; while the abasement of that proud prince, by the judgment of God, even to the condition of the beasts of the field, seemed to prognosticate the approaching downfall of the empire, which came to pass in the days of his grandson.

For now, Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, having performed her appointed task, was to be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah. The staff wherewith the Lord had smitten so many nations, the hammer which had broken the whole earth to pieces, was to be, itself, cut asunder and broken, while the sceptre of the world passed to the second great monarchy, that of the Medes and Persians.

To this end, a prince appears, with a disposition calculated to conciliate the affections of different nations, ranged under his banners. That disposition is improved by a discipline, which has been the admiration of every succeeding age. He is instructed in the best maxims of political wisdom, and his undertakings prosper in his hands. He takes Babylon, and puts a pe-
riod

riod to the Chaldean empire. Profane history relates this transaction at large; but the designs of Providence, accomplished by it, are unfolded in the Scriptures, where God is represented as saying of Cyrus, by name, two hundred years before he was born, "He is my shepherd, and
 " shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to
 " Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the
 " temple, Thy foundations shall be laid. I have
 " raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and
 " he shall let go my captives, not for price nor
 " reward, saith the Lord of hosts. For Jacob
 " my servant's sake, and for Israel mine elect, I
 " have even called thee by name; I have
 " named thee, though thou hast not known me." When Cyrus took possession of Babylon, Daniel was there; and is said to have prospered not only "in the reign of Darius," but also in that "of Cyrus the Persian." It is hardly possible, therefore, to conceive, that these prophecies of Isaiah should not be shewn by him to the new monarch. And, indeed, the proclamation, published by Cyrus in the very first year of his reign, is worded in a manner, which demonstrates that this had been done. It is thus recorded at the

▪ Isai. xlv. 28. xlv. 1—4. 13.

conclusion of the second book of Chronicles—
 “ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,
 “ he made a proclamation throughout all his
 “ kingdom, and put it in writing, saying—
 “ Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia—All the
 “ kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of
 “ heaven given me, and he hath charged me to
 “ build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in
 “ Judah. Who is there among you of all his
 “ people? The Lord his God be with him, and
 “ let him go up.”

Restored by this edict, the Jewish state grew up again to maturity, under the protection of the Persian empire, and at length arose superior to the envy and jealousy of it's neighbours. Under the tyrant Ochus, it suffered some severities from the same empire, which gave way, in it's turn, to the third monarchy, erected on it's ruins, by the king of Græcia^a, or Alexander the Great. The anger of this prince against Jerusalem, occasioned by a refusal of his demands, on a sudden, at the sight of the high priest coming forth in procession to meet him, was converted into a reverence for the temple, and an admiration of the prophecies of Daniel, uttered so long before concerning him, which were shewn to

^a. Daniel viii. 21.

him, as those of *Isaiah*, in a former instance, had been shewn to *Cyrus*. In them seeing himself and the rapidity of his conquests already described, he led his forces against the Persians, as to certain victory^o; and having performed the work whereunto he had been appointed, was thrown aside as a withered rod, dying at *Babylon*, in the thirty-third year of his age.

During the reign of *Ptolemy Lagos*, one of the successors of *Alexander*, the Jews were carried away in great numbers into *Egypt*, by which means the knowledge of the God of *Israel* was diffused among the nations, preparatory to their future conversion by the Gospel. The cruelties of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, another of those successors, served only to manifest the power of that God, and to call forth the glories of the *Asmonean* family, under which the kingdom of *Judah* was enlarged by new accessions, and enjoyed a long succession of halcyon days, very beautifully and affectingly described in the writings of the prophets.

In the time of this family, as we learn from the book of *Maccabees*, the first league was made with the Roman power, which was then gradually rising into the fourth great empire of

^o *Josephus*, *Antiq. Jud.* lib. xi. ad fin.

the world, and protected the Jews for some time, against their adversaries, the kings of Syria.

But when this once highly favoured people had forsaken the word of their God, going astray after their own traditions; when they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, by the crucifixion of the son of God, and the persecution of his apostles; the spirit of life passed from the law to the gospel, and left their whole system a breathless carcase. Directed by heaven, the Roman eagles flew to the prey^p, and Jerusalem suffered in a manner which astonished the soul of Titus himself, and which, from that day to this, hath made the ears of every one, who hath heard it, to tingle.

The Roman empire, by uniting all nations under it's government, prepared the way for the universality of the true religion, which receiving strength from every fresh persecution, at length conquered the conquerors of the world; and the cross became the ornament and glory of the imperial diadem. But a love of the old idolatry, and a zeal for the gods of Romulus, still possessed that great and powerful body of men, the senate, who continually importuned the Christian emperors to restore the ancient

^p Luke xvii. 37.

worship,

worship, and were only restrained by *them* from renewing the persecution, after the example of their ancestors¹. This was the state of things in the fourth century, when God, calling to remembrance the repeated cruelties of the oppressor, and the unexampled sufferings of his faithful people, delivered up to the Barbarians that city, drunken with the blood of the martyrs. “ New nations (says an elegant historian) “ seemed to arise, and to rush from unknown “ regions, in order to take vengeance on the Romans, for the calamities which they had inflicted on mankind². ” The unwieldy fabric of the empire shared the fate of it’s predecessors; it was overthrown with a mighty desolation, and divided into the kingdoms which now subsist around us, the invaders, by change of situation, becoming humanized, and having been converted to the faith of Christ.

Among these western kingdoms, in the bosom of the church, and in the pretended name of Christ, hath arisen a tyrannical and oppressive power, exercising dominion over the understandings and consciences of men, and arming itself

¹ See *Bossuet’s Universal History*, ii. 184. and the authorities there referred to.

² *Robertson’s History of Charles V.* vol. i. sect. 1.

with

with fire and sword, for the punishment of all who presume to call in question the infallibility of it's decisions. About the same period were laid the foundations of another power, destined to be the scourge of God to the corrupt and degenerate Christians of the eastern part of the Roman empire; the Pharaoh, the Nebuchadnezzar, and the Antiochus of latter times. These have their stated task to perform, after which, they likewise, according to the prophecies recorded in the Scriptures (to the interpretation of which learned men are very commendably turning our attention, with increasing probability of success, as the events predicted approach), they likewise will go into perdition. "The Lord will consume them by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy them by the brightness of his coming." Then the happy day, foretold by the prophets, shall arrive, when all earthly rule and authority and power shall be put down, and "the kingdoms of this world shall become," in the most exalted sense of the words, "the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

Thus, by going into the sanctuary of God, we see the end of all human glory. There taking our stand, we behold the empires of the world passing swiftly by us, and vanishing away,
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to give place to that kingdom which shall endure for ever; while the Almighty, by suffering them to continue no longer than they served his designs, affords us sufficient ground to apply to all, his own declaration concerning one of them: "For this cause have I raised thee up, to shew
"in thee my power, and that my name may be
"declared through all the earth". The fate of empires being interwoven with that of Religion, it pleased God to communicate to his servants the prophets, the secrets of his administration with regard to *them*; and the view which we have now taken of it demonstrates, that they are so many instruments in the hand of Providence, to execute it's designs of mercy or judgment on those who successively become the objects of either, according to the uniform tenor of the divine œconomy, from the beginning to the end of time.

From a survey of God's proceedings, learn we to rectify and regulate our own. To punish wickedness and vice, to preserve and promote true religion and virtue, appears to have been the end and design of all his dispensations. Let it be the end and design of all our transactions, upon the present, and upon every other occasion.

* Exod. ix. 16.

The series of events which has been exhibited points out the difference between that which is of the earth, earthy, and that which cometh from above; and directs us where to fix our choice. Not princes only, but empires, you see, are mortal. *They* sink, to rise no more. The Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Græcian, the Roman—where are they? They are gone—They sleep among the dead. And, what they are, the states now subsisting around us, which have so often disturbed the repose of Christendom, and, with their numerous and well-appointed armies, threaten again to disturb it, shall one day be. All below is inconstancy and agitation. But the kingdom of God shall stand. It's foundations were laid before those of the world; and when *that* shall be in ashes, when the powers of the earth and the lights of heaven shall fall, and be extinguished for ever, it's superstructure will appear in perfect beauty. Death dissolves the relation we bear to an earthly government, and all civil distinctions drop into the dust together. But our citizenship, as saith the apostle—*ἡμῶν πολιτεύμα*—is in heaven¹. As Christians, we belong to a polity not subject to dissolution; a society, whose duration runs

¹ Philip. iii. 20.

parallel with the days of eternity. We form a body, of which Messiah is the head, and to which angels are therefore enjoined to minister. What wonder is it, that we find exceeding great and precious promises made to this high and heavenly community, and fulfilled, with regard to the empires of the world, from age to age? “Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their faces toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet”. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought; for the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.”

Thus “glorious are the things spoken of thee, thou city of God!” May we not, therefore,

^u Isai. xlix. 23.

^v Ib. lx. 14, &c. 11, 12.

^x Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

take up our parable, with Balaam, and say,
 “ Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob,
 “ neither is there any divination against Israel’ !
 “ How shall we curse whom God hath not
 “ cursed; or how shall we defy whom God hath
 “ not defied ? Behold, we have received com-
 “ mandment to bless : He hath blessed, and we
 “ cannot reverse it ^a.” If the dealings of the
 Almighty with a people be squared by their deal-
 ings with his Religion, the state of Religion will
 always be the surest criterion whereby to judge
 of the state of that nation wherein it is planted;
 and there can be no greater enemies to their
 country, than those who are enemies to her;
 since concerning her He hath declared, who can-
 not deceive, or be deceived—“ No weapon that
 “ is formed against thee shall prosper; and every
 “ tongue that shall rise against thee in judg-
 “ ment thou shalt condemn ^b.”

God doth not every day manifest his will, by
 his prophets, respecting the kingdoms which he
 setteth up, and putteth down. But having so
 often done it in the cases of those great empires
 of which we have been speaking, he sheweth us,
 by such remarkable and prominent instances, how

^y Numb. xxiii. 23.

^a Numb. xxiii. 20.

^z Ib. xxiii. 8.

^b Isai. liv. 17.

he acts in all others, and thereby enables us to form a competent idea of our own situation and circumstances. Sacred history informs us what was the particular state of the ancient people of God, when he punished them by the heathen nations; and both sacred and profane history inform us what was the state of each empire, when subverted by another. Similar causes produce similar effects. For though God's counsels are always executed, yet they are executed, for the most part, in that way which we are wont to call the natural course of things. He who has ordained that all the parts of the universe should have a mutual dependance on each other, and operate regularly, by a due concatenation of causes and effects, has likewise ordained that the course of human affairs should have it's progression and proportion. Individuals and communities arise, accordingly, at proper times, with qualities suited to the station they are destined to fill, and the work which they are intended to perform. It is, therefore, no less useful than curious, in reading history, to mark the different dispositions, manners, and characters of nations, and their rulers; since these are the instruments working, under the direction of Providence, for the accomplishment of it's designs,

without any infringement of man's free will. If you behold a nation distinguished by irreligion and contempt of things sacred, by licentiousness, faction, luxury, dissipation, and effeminacy, be assured that, without a reformation, and a return to first principles, the conquest of that nation by some other is becoming more and more feasible every day; the same vices, which provoke divine vengeance, preparing the way for it's execution. Such were the characteristics of the ancient people of God, in the times preceding their several captivities. Such was the case when the old Assyrian empire perished with Sardanapalus; when Babylon was surpris'd by Cyrus; when Darius was overthrown by Alexander; when Greece fell under the dominion of the Romans; when these last were overwhelmed by the northern nations; and when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Every man, who has the prosperity of his country at heart, should very seriously consider, how far these *tokens* are to be found upon ourselves; what can be done to prevent the farther spreading of the infection, and to eradicate the seeds of the disorder. Those in the higher ranks of life, it may be said—it ought to be said—cannot complain, that a bright example of virtue is not held forth to them

them from the throne. Happy would it be for themselves, happy for the community, would they study to reflect it's lustre on the wide extended circles of their inferiors and dependents. The legislature hath by no means shewn itself backward in supporting that establishment of Christianity settled among us at the Reformation. The integrity of those truly reverend and respectable persons, entrusted with the important charge of administering justice and judgment in the land—that particular, which rendered the Romans, in the opinion even of their enemies, worthy to be masters of the world—is universally seen, and gratefully acknowledged. In these sequestered and peaceful scenes, the destined mansions of literature and religion (long may they continue to be so, loved by the Good, and patronized by the Great!) though the fences of our inclosure will not serve entirely to exclude the turn and temper of the world about us, yet many are diligent to teach, and many attentive to learn. Wisdom uttereth her voice, and the sound of the Gospel is heard. There is a river, the streams whereof, going forth from this their fountain, often cause the wilderness to become a fruitful field; to rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It must be added, that there certainly resides in

British bosoms a laudable propensity to acts of beneficence. I have no desire to present the dark side of the prospect. May the whole become light ! May the returning *spirit* and *power* of godliness reanimate it's form, and be again the heart and soul of every action and intention, producing, with piety and charity unfeigned, obedience, union, honesty, frugality, temperance, purity ; let me add, health, strength, and true fortitude. With these should we, at any future time, be called to go forth against our old enemies (all our present unhappy differences adjusted, and all our divisions healed), we shall go forth under the favour and protection of Heaven ; and then, He who created the world, and who preserves it, for the sake of his church ; He who secured her in the ark, when the flood came, and watched over her in the families of the holy patriarchs ; He who brought her out of Egypt, led her through the wilderness, introduced her into the promised inheritance, and made her to be the glory of the whole earth ; He who raised up Cyrus to deliver her from the power of Babylon ; who turned the heart of Alexander in her favour ; who went out, with Judas and his brethren, to the battle against the armies of Antiochus, and bade the sword of
Constantine

Constantine conquer under the banner of the Cross; He, the Lord of Hosts, will ever be with us; He, the God of Jacob, will ever be our refuge. — “O that my people” — says he, in that most condescending and affectionate wish — “O that my people had hearkened unto me, “and Israel had walked in my ways! I should “soon have subdued their enemies, and turned “my hand against their adversaries^c — THEM “THAT HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR; BUT “SUCH AS DESPISE ME SHALL BE LIGHTLY “ESTEEMED.”

^c Pf. lxxxi. 13, 14.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
AT ST. MARY'S,
ON SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1775.

S. E. R. M. O. N.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AT ST. MARTIN'S

OF WESTMINSTER

S E R M O N VII.

R O M. X. 13.

*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall
be saved.*

TH E text, as Dr. Whitby well remarks upon it, presents us with a double argument in favour of our Lord's Divinity. First, it applies to HIM, what by the prophet Joel is spoken of Jehovah ; secondly, it affirms him to be the object of religious adoration. Either of these particulars does, indeed, imply the other. For if he be Jehovah, he must be the object of religious adoration ; and, if the object of religious adoration, he must be Jehovah. We might therefore take occasion, from this passage, to prove his Divinity, and from thence infer, that he is to be worshipped ; but, at present, that the subject may be viewed on every side, let us take it in another light ; let us first prove, that he is to be worshipped, and from thence infer his Divinity.

But

But it is incumbent upon me previously to observe, that, since the composition of the following discourse, the cause has been pleaded at large by much abler advocates^a; for which reason, a resolution was once taken to lay it aside, as fully and happily superseded. But a saying of one of the ancients occurred, that in times when erroneous and noxious tenets were diffused, all men should embrace some opportunity to bear their testimony against them. It occurred likewise, that the evidence, drawn to a point, and delivered from the pulpit, might strike many (of my younger auditors more especially) who might not be disposed to search for it in tracts of greater extent, and far greater merit. This consideration, above all, prevailed, that the established doctrine concerning the worship of our Redeemer might receive no small degree of confirmation in the minds of its professors, when, without concert or consultation, persons sitting down to reconsider it, at different times, and in different places, should be found to represent it in the same light, and to

^a See Dr. *Randolph's* Vindication of the Worship of the Son and Holy Ghost; and Mr. *Bingham's* Vindication of the Doctrine and Liturgy of the Church of England. See likewise Mr. *Burgh's* Scriptural Confutation of the Arguments against the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

vindicate

vindicate it by the same arguments. Intreating your favourable acceptance of this very necessary apology, I will venture to proceed.

Invocation, then, is a part, and a principal part, of adoration; but my text mentions the invocation of Christ, as a duty, to the performance of which, salvation is annexed. "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." The context treats wholly of Christ, in whom, it is said, "Whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed;" and in whom, it is likewise said, the Jews refused to believe, when they had heard of him by the preaching of the apostles. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. But how shall they call on *him*, of whom they have not *heard*? and how shall they hear, without a *preacher*," &c. Christ therefore is, without doubt, the person mentioned in the text; he is, consequently, the object of invocation, a principal part of religious adoration; and the man who desires to be "saved," must "call upon him," by prayer.

In the apostolical times, all Christians were supposed, by virtue of their profession, to invoke Christ, and were characterized by that very circumstance. Thus St. Paul addresses
one

one of his Epistles, “ to all that in every place
 “ call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both
 “ theirs and ours^b,” that is, says an excellent
 paraphrast^c, “ whom we and all true Christians
 “ join in acknowledging and adoring as their Lord
 “ and ours.” In the ixth chapter of the Acts,
 we find Ananias saying of Saul, “ And here he
 “ hath authority to bind all that call on thy
 “ name ;” that is, says Dr. Hammond, “ who
 “ publickly avow the worship of Christ.”
 Again, in the same chapter, we read, “ And
 “ straightway he preached Christ in the syna-
 “ gogues, that he is the Son of God. But all
 “ that heard him were amazed, and said, is not
 “ this he that destroyed them who *called on*
 “ *this name?*” that is, evidently, the name of
 Christ.

Some critics tell us, that the phrase *ἐπικαλε-
 μένοι το ὄνομα Χριστοῦ*, “ calling upon the name of
 “ Christ,” is to be taken passively, as denoting
 those who were *named by the name of Christ*, or
 who were called *Christians*. But this cannot
 be. The name, *Christian*, was not known in
 the world, till some time after St. Paul’s con-
 version, when, as St. Luke expressly informs
 us, “ the disciples were called *Christians* first at

^b 1 Cor. i. 2.

^c Dr. Doddridge.

“ Antioch ;”

“Antioch;” whereas, before that time, they were distinguished by the title of *ἐπικαλεμένοι το ὄνομα Χριστοῦ*, “those who called on the name of Christ.” Besides that *ἐπικαλεομαι* (as hath been justly observed), when followed by an accusative case, always signifies to *invoke*, or *worship*, except only where it signifies to *appeal to*. Thus, in the chapter from whence my text is taken — “The same Lord is rich to all who call upon him — for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” In the xxiid chapter of the Acts, Saul is bidden to “wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” And Origen, who must have understood the import and force of a Greek participle, at least as well as any modern critic, commenting on one of the above cited passages, says — “The Apostle, in these words, declares him to be God, whose name was called upon.” The argument, therefore, deduced from this expression, we may venture to say, stands good; nor can it admit of any farther reply, or evasion.

^d ἐν παντὶ τῆς ἐπικαλεμένης αὐτοῦ — πᾶς γὰρ ὃς αὐτὸν ἐπικαλεσθήσεται τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου σωθήσεται.

^e Ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου.

^f Origen. Com. in Rom. x. lib. viii.

St. Paul's usual form of benediction was by invocation of the name of Christ. "Grace be
 " to you, and peace, from God the Father,
 " and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Sometimes
 the name of Christ stands in the first order;
 " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the
 " love of God, and the communion of the
 " Holy Ghost, be with you all ^a." In another
 place, " The Lord Jesus Christ comfort your
 " hearts ^b;" that is, I pray the Lord Jesus Christ so
 to do. And speaking of his thorn in the flesh, he
 says—" *I besought the Lord* thrice, that it might
 " depart from me. And he said unto me, My
 " grace is sufficient for thee; for *my strength* is
 " made perfect in weakness. Most gladly there-
 " fore will I rather glory in my *infirmities*, that
 " *the power of Christ* may rest upon me ^c:" —
 The *power of Christ*, — that is, plainly, of *the*
Lord whom he *besought*, and who said, *My*
strength is made perfect in weakness. — I would
 intreat your attention to the following passage in
 1 John v. 13, &c. " These things have I writ-
 " ten unto you—that ye may believe on the
 " name of the Son of God. And this is the
 " confidence we have in him, that if we ask
 " any thing according to his will, he heareth

^a 2 Cor. xiii. 14.^b 2 Theff. ii. 16.^c 2 Cor. xii. 8.

" us.

“ us. And if we know that he hear us, what-
 “ soever we ask we know that we have the pe-
 “ titions we desired of him.” In another part
 of the epistle, the same precept is repeated,
 but the word *God* is used, instead of the word
Christ—“ We have confidence toward *God*, and
 “ whatsoever we ask, we receive of him^k.”
 Can a man read these two passages, and doubt,
 for a single moment, whether his Saviour be
 the God that heareth prayer?

The blessed martyr Stephen, just before he
 expired, preferred the following prayer to his
 Saviour, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Can
 a departing soul be thus solemnly committed
 into the hands of any one, but of him, who is
 “ the God of the spirits of all flesh ?” Does
 not St. Stephen here worship Christ, in the very
 same manner, in which, a little before, Christ
 himself had worshipped the Father? Where is
 the difference between, “ Father, into thy hands
 “ I commend my spirit”—and—“ Lord Jesus,
 “ receive my spirit ?” Does not the martyr
 likewise address Christ, as the person who could
 forgive sins? Where is the difference, again,
 between — “ Father, forgive them, for they
 “ know not what they do”—and—“ Lord, lay

^k Chap. iii. 22.

“ not

“not this sin to their charge?” Or shall a dying Christian scruple to say what St. Stephen said, because Christ does not appear to the one, as he was pleased to do to the other? It is a cavil not fit to proceed from the mouth of a serious man.

We read of many persons, who, when Christ was upon earth, falling down upon their faces, and worshipping him, were never checked or reproved for so doing, as St. John was, when he offered to worship the angel, and Cornelius, when he made the same offer to St. Peter.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, evincing the superiority of the Son of God over all created spirits, produces the following testimony: “When he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him¹.” If you ask what kind of worship the apostle may be supposed to intend, let us turn to the Revelation. There, upon the exaltation of our Lord, after his sufferings, St. John represents to us the church universal in heaven and earth, with the parts of created nature, and all the angelic intelligences, ascribing the very same “ blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him

¹ Heb. i. 6.

“ that

“ that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb,” in conjunction^m. In heaven, the will of God is duly performed, and all “ honour the Son, “ even as they honour the Father ”.” Why should it be otherwise on earth?

That it ought not to be otherwise, but that equal honour should be paid to both Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, is evidently implied by the baptismal form running in the name of all the Three. If the Holy Spirit were a property only, as the Socinians pretend, could a *property* be thus joined with the Father and the Son? *They* are not properties; they are persons, certainly. If the Son and the Spirit were creatures, could they be joined with the Father, in the solemn act of baptism? Baptism is the consecration of him, who is baptised, to the service — of whom? Of God, and two creatures? No, surely, but of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and, whether St. John hath said it, or not, if there be any meaning in words, **THESE THREE ARE ONE**; they are the one object of our faith and our love, of our prayers and our praises. While this form continues to be used in the church, the doctrine of the **TRINITY** cannot perish from it; and he

^m Rev. v. 13.ⁿ John v. 23.

who denies glory and worship to be due to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, does, in effect, renounce his baptism; and ought to be initiated, by a new form, into a new religion.

Thus stands the scripture evidence: and we find the practice of the primitive Christians entirely conformable to it. A remarkable instance offers itself, very early, in the case of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. He suffered in the year 167. He joins God the Father and the Son together in his prayers for grace and benediction upon men, conceived in the following manly and exalted strain of piety and charity—"The God
 "and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and
 "Christ himself the eternal High Priest, the
 "Son of God, build you up in faith, and
 "truth, and in all meekness, to live without
 "anger, in patience, in long suffering, and for-
 "bearance, and give you a lot and part among
 "the saints, and to us with you, and to all
 "them that are under Heaven, who shall be-
 "lieve in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in his
 "Father who raised him from the dead^o." And when he was brought to the stake, he concluded his last prayer with this doxology to the whole Trinity—"I bless thee, I praise

^o Polycarp. Epist. ad Philipp. sect. xii.

"thee,

“ thee, I glorify thee for all things, together
 “ with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ,
 “ thy beloved Son, with whom, unto thee, and
 “ the Holy Spirit, be glory, both now, and for
 “ ever, world without end^p.” So prayed this
 holy bishop and blessed martyr of Christ, at
 the hour of his departure out of the world.
 As he had been a disciple of St. John the
 Evangelist, we cannot well suppose him igno-
 rant of the proper object of Christian worship.
 We find him in possession of the doctrine of a
 coequal and coeternal Trinity, considered as
 that object; a doctrine which, we may venture
 to say, he did not derive from the Platonists of
 Alexandria, from scholastic theology, or from
 the papal chair. And we may continue, it is
 hoped, to use the prayers in our own liturgy,
 though they conclude exactly like the prayer of
 Polycarp.

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, suffered for the
 faith, fifty years before Polycarp, and had con-
 versed familiarly with many of the apostles.
 He begins one of his Epistles in the following
 manner:—“ I glorify Jesus Christ our God,
 “ who hath given unto you this wisdom^q.”

^p Martyr. Polycarp. apud Coteler. Patres Apostol. t. ii. p. 199.

^q Δοξαζω Ιησουν Χριστον του Θεου, τον υιου υμης ποφισαντα. Ignat.
 Epist. ad Smyrn.

Could such men as these, instructed by the apostles themselves, be mistaken in the capital article of all religion, the object of divine worship? Impossible! A man must have the credulity of an infidel to believe it.

Justin Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the second century, declares to the Pagans, that the object of Christian worship was the whole Trinity. "We worship and adore" (says he) the God of righteousness, and his "Son, and the Holy Spirit of prophecy." Yet, a little after, he tells the emperors, "We hold" "it unlawful to worship any, but God alone." So Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, — "We worship and adore no" "creature, but the Father, the Son, and the" "Holy Ghost." Give me leave to insist a little on an argument suggested by these passages, because it seems for ever to determine the question concerning the faith of the primitive church, on the article of our Lord's true and proper Divinity. The Christians objected to the Pagans their idolatry. The Pagans retorted the objection on the Christians, as the worshippers of a crucified man. Here, you see, was a

* Justin. Apol. ii.

* Comment. in Epist. ad Rom. lib. ii.

stroke aimed at the very heart of the new religion. And now, how do the Christians defend themselves? Had the charge, like many others, been false, they would certainly have denied it, at once. It behoved them so to have done; for the contest was *pro aris et focis*; for every thing near and dear. They could never have continued to reproach their adversaries with a crime, of which they were notoriously guilty themselves. But they do not deny the fact. They acknowledge it universally; and yet, at the same time, affirm, "We worship God alone." In their practice, then, they shewed their belief of Christ's true Divinity. They worshipped him only upon this ground, that he was one God with the Father; and to have done it on any other supposition, had been idolatry, by their own confession. What are we, therefore, to think of our modern unitarians, who repeatedly, and as it should seem, seriously tell us, that all the fathers of the three first centuries were of their opinion"? To say this, is to make them guilty of the grossest idolatry, and to involve them in a monstrous contradic-

¹ Θεὸν μὴ ἑνὸν προσκυνούμεν.

² "All Christian people, for upwards of 300 years after Christ, till the council of Nice, were generally Unitarians." Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 24.

tion ; they laid it down as a first principle, that God alone was to be worshipped ; and, all the while, gave divine honour to one, whom (if these moderns say true) they did not hold to be God by nature, but a creature only.

Let any person, with attention and impartiality, survey this argument again and again on every side ; and it will appear to be absolutely unanswerable. The earliest Christians professed to worship God alone ; but they constantly and uniformly professed to worship Christ ; therefore they deemed Christ to be very God. The same is to be said with regard to the Holy Spirit. No matter *how* the Son was begotten of the Father, or *how* the Spirit proceeds from both. The *mode* we have nothing to do with ; it is above, and beyond us ; it cannot be the subject of our reasonings. We are not now entangled in the thorny parts of the subject ; we are not disputing about metaphysical niceties and distinctions. A plain matter of fact is before us. The premises are fixed, by ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the primitive apologists, firm as the everlasting hills ; no other conclusion can be drawn from them by the art of man ; and the argument is obvious to the common sense of the whole world.

During

During the persecutions under the heathen emperors, the martyrs, who suffered in them, commonly directed their prayers, as St. Stephen did, personally to Christ, in whose cause they laid down their lives, and into whose hands they resigned their spirits, commending their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator and Redeemer. In the Dioclesian persecution, as Eusebius informs us, the inhabitants of a city in Phrygia, men, women, and children, while assembled in the church, at their devotions, were by their enemies surprised and burnt, "calling upon Christ, God over all *." Many other instances occur in the same historian, where the dying martyrs address their prayers to Christ, under the highest titles and attributes of the Divinity, as the living and true God, the great king over all the earth, omniscient and almighty, the Son of God, and himself true and very God. And, as such, Eusebius says, the highest powers on earth confessed and adored him *.

Would you hear the contemporary writers, among the heathens, bearing testimony to the

* Τὸν ἐνὶ πάντων Θεὸν Χριστὸν ἐνδοξάζοντες.

* *Euseb.* lib. x. cap. iv. See the passages cited by *Bingham*, in *Eccles. Antiq.* b. xiii. ch. ii.

same great and important truth, concerning the object of worship in the earliest days of the Christian Church? You shall hear them.

Pliny lived in the beginning of the second century, and, as a judge under Trajan, took the confessions of some revolting Christians. He says, they declared to him, "their custom" "was, to meet on a certain day, before it was" "light, and, among other parts of their worship," "sing an hymn to Christ, as to their God".

Towards the close of the same century, Lucian, or whoever was the author of the dialogue styled *Philopatris*, bearing his name, and certainly written about that time, introduces, in a scoffing way, a Christian catechist instructing a pagan catechumen. The latter asks, "By whom, then, shall I swear?" that is, whom shall I take to be my God, the object of my worship? The answer is, "By that God that" "reigns on high, the great, immortal, heavenly" "God, and the Son of the Father, and the" "Spirit proceeding from the Father, One in" "Three, and Three in One. Take these for" "your Jupiter; imagine this to be your God".

† Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem. Plin. lib. x. Ep. 97.

‡ Lucian. *Philopatris*, prope fin.

Lucian,

Lucian, then, had evidently learned, and it was well known among the heathen in his time, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, constituted the object of Christian worship. The manner in which this testimony affected Soci-nus, well deserves your notice — “ I never met
 “ with any thing which seems more to favour
 “ the notion that a Trinity of persons in the
 “ Godhead was in that age the object of belief
 “ and worship, than this passage from the dia-
 “ logue styled *Philopatris* *.” It might, per-
 haps, be some advantage to it in his esteem, as
 Dr. Waterland observes^b, that it came from a
 pagan, though it had not weight enough to
 conquer his prejudices; for he never wanted
 evasions. But you see in how very forcible a
 manner it struck his apprehension.

Such was the practice of the Christian church, respecting the worship of it's Saviour, from the very beginning, and during the three first ages; long before Arianism appeared in the

* Nec vero nobis quidquam hactenus legere contigit, quod trini istius Dei, a Christianis jam tum recepti et culti, fidem facere videatur magis, quam quæ ex dialogo, qui *Philopatris* inscribitur, et inter Luciani opera numeratur, ad id probandum affertur. Socin. adv. Eutrop. c. xv. p. 689. Op.

^b Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, p. 370.

world, or any of those difficult questions were raised, which afterwards perplexed men with unintelligible subtleties, occasioned by the restless endeavours and sophistry of the Arian party.

What shall we, then, say to these things? What can we say, but that He, to the invocation of whose name salvation is promised; He, whose name his disciples, before they were called Christians, invoked, and were known to be his disciples by so doing; He, in whose name the Apostles were accustomed to give their benedictions, and concerning whom St. John says, that, "whatever we ask of him according to his will, we shall have the petitions we desired of him;" He, who was worshipped by men, without reproving them for it, on earth, and to whom, in heaven, all the angelic hosts, with the spirits of the redeemed, and the whole creation of God, give glory and honour; He, whom the church universal professed, from the beginning, to adore; and into whose hands the dying martyrs, from Stephen downward, committed their departing spirits; He, to whose service and worship, with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost, every Christian is dedicated, in baptism; that this person is, indeed, what St. Paul certainly styles him,

" God

“ God over all, blessed for ever *;” and that we all may, and ought to use the words of St. Thomas, uttered not, as is pretended, by way of exclamation to the Father, but in an immediate address to the Son, — (“ Then Thomas answered, and said *unto him*) — My Lord, “ and my God †.”

For consider well with yourselves—if we are to worship only the Lord our God, as the primitive Christians professed to do; and if we are, yet, to worship Christ, as they also professed to do; must it not of necessity follow, that Christ is the Lord our God?

If millions of his servants, from all the different parts of the world, are to invoke him by prayer, and he hears the prayer of the heart, as well as that of the lips, must he not be omniscient and omnipresent, to do this? The argument has often been urged with success against saint-worship. It holds equally strong against creature-worship.

If St. Paul blamed the heathen, because they gave divine worship to those who were not Gods by nature ‡, shall we be blameless, when we worship Christ, unless he be by nature God §?

* 1 Rom. ix. 5.

† John xx. 28.

‡ Μη Θεων εστι Θεοις.

§ Θεων Θεοις.

If divine worship be due to Christ, must he not be possessed of that divine dignity and excellence, which are the proper foundation of it? And can these be communicated to a creature? Between the creature and it's Creator, and the honour due respectively to each, must not the difference be ever infinite? Socinus, who held Christ to be a mere man, and yet held divine worship to be due to him, was confounded and silenced by this very argument, in a conference with one of his disciples*, who carried his principle to it's proper conclusion, and denied Christ to be at all the object of divine worship.

But do not the Scriptures affirm, that Christ is to be worshipped in consequence of his sufferings, and exaltation, and the power with which he was then invested? Undoubtedly. And do not the same Scriptures inform us, that God was worshipped in consequence of his having created the world, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? He was then worshipped in the new relation of Creator, as Christ was worshipped, upon his ascension, in the new relation of Redeemer. But God was worshipped before the

* Frankenius. See an abstract of the dispute, in Bishop Bull's *Primitiva et Apostolica Traditio de Jesu Christi Divinitate*, cap. vi. p. 393.

world was created, and will be worshipped after it's dissolution. The Son of God was worshipped before he entered upon the work of Redemption. He had glory with the Father before the foundation of the world^b; he existed "in the form of God," before he existed in the "likeness of man;" that is, he was God, before he was man. And, as God, he will be worshipped to eternity, when his mediatorial kingdom, as Messiah, shall be at an end.

The worshippers of Christ are charged with idolatry. If he be a mere man, or, indeed, if he be a creature, there is foundation for the charge. But if, at his birth, "God" was "manifest in the flesh^c," of what crime are they guilty, who deny him the honour due to him, and turn his humiliation, on their account, into an argument against his Divinity? And let it be observed, that if we are guilty of idolatry, the whole church of Christ has been guilty of it, in the grossest manner, from the days of the Apostles to this present hour.

It hath been asserted, that the worship of Christ is inconsistent with his office of Mediator. But why? It seems rather to be implied, than excluded; since a Mediator must commu-

^a John xvii. 5.

^b 1 Tim. iii. 16.

nicate with both parties; and our method of communicating with Christ must be by praying to him. Is there any contradiction, or incongruity, in the conduct of our devotions, if we sometimes beseech the Father to pardon and bless us, for the sake of his dear Son; and, at other times, intreat the Son to bestow upon us those mercies, which the Father has granted for his sake? The same is to be said of the Spirit and his comforts, given by the Father, through the Son. In one word; if the divine persons, in the œconomy of man's redemption, have graciously condescended to assume these offices, and to act in these characters, shall we therefore say, they are not divine? This consideration alone seems to afford a general and satisfactory answer to all the objections founded on those texts, which intimate disparity and inferiority; which speak of *sending*, and *being sent*, and the like. — How mournful is the reflection, that this very consideration, which ought to fill our hearts with wonder, love, and praise, should be made occasion of denying the Lord that brought us, and the Spirit that consecrates us to glory and immortality! — Lord, what is man! behold, with compassion, his miserable depravity; and open his eyes, that he may behold it himself!

But

But you, my brethren (I address myself to the younger part of my audience), have not so unlearned Christ. You know in whom you have believed; and you know the importance of believing Him to be, what He really is. The question we have been discussing is not of a trifling or indifferent nature. It relates to the prime and leading article of all religion. It is not a point of speculation merely: our daily practice is concerned in it's determination; according to which, we are led either to honour, or to dishonour our Redeemer. Minds honest and ingenuous, like yours, will find no difficulty in forming a right judgment upon the subject. In order to do it, there is no necessity for you to plunge into all the metaphysical depths of the controversy. The dispute lies in a small compass. It turns upon a fact, whether Christ was, or was not, the object of divine worship, in the apostolical times, and those immediately succeeding. The evidence has been clearly, I would hope, though briefly, stated to you, in the preceding discourse. But I would wish you to search, and collect it more at large for yourselves; those of you, especially, who are preparing to teach others the truth, and to guard them against the various errors which

mark

mark these latter days. The scriptural part of the evidence lies in a little compass. The remainder may be found in the epistles of the apostolical fathers, the apologies of Justin Martyr and one or two more, and the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius. Should I say, that all these might be read, with ease, in two months, I should say no more than the truth. And so much, at least, of primitive antiquity ought to be studied by every divine; indeed, by every Christian, who has leisure and ability. For why should any man continue ignorant of that, which is so soon, and so easily known? Be conversant in the Scriptures, and acquaint yourselves well with the doctrine and the practice of the church, in its earliest and purest days, when you first enter upon the ministry; and the efforts of unhappily misguided men will in vain be afterwards exerted, to move you from the rock of your salvation. Remember Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and consider how great things he hath done for you; things, which, had they been left for a creature to effect, had been uneffected at this hour; they must have ceased, to eternity; "none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him."

“him.” To withhold prayer from your Saviour, is impious perverseness; to withhold praise and thanksgiving, is impious ingratitude. Heaven resounds with Salvation to the Lamb triumphant; and shall earth be fully silent? Christ rejoiced in his afflictions, and esteemed them glory, for your sake. No temptation could prevail upon the Lord, in the hour of suffering and sorrow, to relinquish his gracious purpose, and desert the cause of his disciples; let no temptation prevail upon them to desert and disown the cause of their Lord. Would any man persuade you to refuse divine worship to your Redeemer? Reject the attempt (whoever makes it) with a noble scorn; and whatever others may think, or however they may act, upon the occasion, do you call to mind the generous confession uttered by the martyr Polycarp, when the Roman Proconsul had urged him to deny Christ.—“Fourscore and six years
“ (said the venerable old bishop) have I served
“ him, and never yet received any thing but
“ good at his hands: how, then, shall I now
“ blaspheme my King and my Saviour^k?

^k Martyrium Polycarpi apud Coteler. Patr. Apostol. t. ii. p. 198.

"The wishold prayer from your sa-
 vious, is insidious pervasiveness; to wishold prayer
 and thanksgiving, is insidious pervasiveness; it is
 reckons with salvation to the Lord, and
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 generous contention uttered by the martyr Fox-
 craft, when the Roman Pontiff had urged
 him to deny Christ:—"Forsooth and six years
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A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT THE
CHURCH OF St. MARGARET's, WESTMINSTER,

ON FRIDAY, FEB. 4, 1780.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT ST. MARGARET'S

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AT THE

CHURCH OF ST. MARGARET, WESTMINSTER

ON FRIDAY, 18th OF 1780

S E R M O N VIII.

DEUT. XXIII. 9.

*When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then
keep thee from every wicked thing.*

AS a minister of that Gospel which was first published by the Prince of Peace, who came to reconcile all things in heaven and earth, and bequeathed peace, as his last and best legacy, to his disciples, I could rather have wished, it might have been my province to congratulate you this day on the approach of its re-establishment in the world; on the delightful prospect of times, when the whole earth should once more sit quiet, and be at leisure to attend to better things, than ingenious and well concerted plans of mutual destruction; when “nation should not lift up sword against
“nation, neither should they learn war any
“more.” These ought to be the effects of Religion; these would be its effects, were it universally understood and practised; these will

be its effects, at a more auspicious æra of the christian church, and in a happier clime, as all the prophets have foretold, which have been since the world began.

Let none, meanwhile, be offended and stumble at that stumbling-stone laid in their way by the frequency of wars among nations professing Christianity. They owe not their origin to Religion, but to the want of it. The fault is in the ground, not in the seed, which is good, but is either stolen away, or withered, or choked by the passions growing up with it, and sometimes, even making it the cause, the very innocent cause, of those dissensions and animosities, which it was designed for ever to extirpate. “Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your desires,” which your Religion should mortify and subdue? Doubtless, the sight of *Christian, Catholic, Faithful, and Apostolic* princes, sending their numerous regiments to slaughter one another in the field of battle, forms a shocking contrast to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus—so shocking, that some have been thereby induced to maintain the utter unlawfulness of all war. But what then is to be done? Who can prevent a restless and
ambi-

ambitious state from attacking it's neighbour? In these circumstances, such men must either defend themselves, or be defended by others, or God must interpose miraculously in their defence, or all must quietly submit to conquest and captivity by an unjust invader. Had this last been intended, that rigid moralist, the Baptist, would not have regulated, but prohibited the military profession; nor would Christians have served, as we know they did, with fidelity and diligence, in the armies of the Pagan emperors.

The lawfulness of a war must therefore be rested now, under the Gospel, upon the same foot on which it hath ever stood from the beginning, namely, the justice of it; and upon a supposition that our cause is good—as we humbly trust it is—we may undoubtedly accept the permission, or rather commission, implied in the first words of the text; “When the host
“goeth forth against thine enemies”—The people of God may still be brought under a necessity of engaging in war, defensive or offensive, to maintain their rights, or to avenge their wrongs; and that, whether against foreign enemies, or rebellious subjects: much more, if the latter, after having erected the standard of independency, should unite with the former,

and exclaim concerning those who nourished and brought them up, like the children of Lot, when Assur had acceded to the League—
“Come, and let us root also them out, that
“they may be no more a people; and that the
“name of Israel may be no more in remem-
“brance!” In circumstances like these, I say, when all is at stake, the people of God may carry on a war, as the only means left them to obtain an honourable and permanent peace, which, in many cases, can only be the fruit of victory; and heroes might again be celebrated by an Apostle (should such heroes arise, with an Apostle to celebrate them) who, through faith, had “subdued kingdoms,” as well as “wrought righteousness.”

Between these two achievements, seemingly so very different (and often, alas, really so!) the latter part of the text points out a nearer connection, than might, perhaps, have been imagined ever to subsist. “When the host
“goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep
“thee from every wicked thing.” If, even with right on thy side, thou wouldest conquer and triumph, remember to prepare the way by repentance and reformation. If thou desirest to become *great*, let ambition first excite thee
to

to be *good*. The qualities are associated in the style imperial of heaven—"the Lord of Hosts—the HOLY One of Israel." The characters therefore of the Warrior and the Christian are not incompatible. The first convert to the Gospel from among the nations was a military man; Cornelius the centurion. That profession may unite with the clerical, in the common cause; and the General may still go forth, as of old, with the Prophet by his side. While the hands of Joshua are extended in the field, those of Moses may be elevated in prayer; and the ministers of Religion may animate the people to overcome the adversary without them, by opposing and vanquishing, as a preliminary step, the enemy within them, the most dangerous enemy both to individuals and communities.

What God has thus joined together it is the error of the times to put asunder; to think only of our fleets and armies, and to forget our faith and practice. There are few to whom it occurs, that the latter can have any influence on the success of the former. Fleets and armies must undoubtedly go forth; they must have pay; they must have provision; they must have arms; they must have skilful leaders:
but

but when all the arrangements are made, if God go not forth with them, vain is the help of man ! “ The horse is prepared ”—he ought to be prepared—“ against the day of battle ; “ but salvation is of the Lord.” This idea, which never should be absent from our minds, and the correspondent affection which it is calculated to awaken in them, are expressed, in one of the prayers used upon these occasions, with a propriety, dignity, and pathos, which nothing can exceed—nothing can withstand. “ O Lord God of our salvation, in whose hands “ are the issues of life and death, of good and “ evil, and without whose aid the wisest coun- “ sels of frail man, and the multitude of an “ host, and all the instruments of war, are but “ weak and vain ;—incline thine ear, we pray “ thee, to the earnest and devout supplications “ of thy servants ; who, not confiding in the “ splendour of any thing that is great, or the “ stability of any thing that is strong here “ below, do most humbly flee, O Lord, unto “ thee for succour, and put their trust under “ the shadow of thy wings.” These have been the sentiments of Britons from age to age ; and let them continue to be so, till time and the world shall finish their course together.

In

In uttering them, we speak the words not of superstition, bigotry, or enthusiasm, but of truth and soberness, if there be a God who governs the world; and if there be not, why do we fast and pray?—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" we perish for ever, and become as if we had never been born. The doctrine of Epicurus is embraced, for the sake of the inference drawn from it. But we have been better instructed; and therefore let the Soldier, as well as the Christian, put on his armour with prayer and supplication. If, on the contrary, "when the host goeth forth," it should carry prodigality, vice, and profaneness, with it, abroad, and they who send it forth should practise the same at home, what hope could remain? "Wouldest not thou, O our God, be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping?"

For let us reflect, what an aggravation it must needs be of national wickedness in the sight of God, if it should be suffered to increase, or even to continue the same, at such a season as this.

War, in it's own nature, is a species of justice, of corrective justice. It is intended to be

be such, by those who enter into it, as deeming themselves to have been aggrieved, and finding no other method of obtaining redress. But—Thou that undertakest to correct offences in others, dost thou abandon thyself to the like? Thou that goest about to chastise thy fellow subject for rebellion against his earthly sovereign, art thou a rebel against the King eternal, immortal, invisible? This would be really casting out evil spirits through their prince. The man must be hardened indeed, who feels no compunction, when punishing his brother for crimes, which he allows in himself. Sin, at any time, is sin; but when we are inflicting vengeance upon it in others—as the Apostle most emphatically expresses himself, “it be-
“ comes *exceeding* sinful.”

If we consider war, as it respects God, we may recollect, that peace is ever classed among the choicest of those blessings, which he bestows upon a favoured people; whose felicity in the enjoyment of it is beautifully represented by the circumstance of converting their military weapons into implements of agriculture; “beat-
“ ing their swords into plowshares, and their
“ spears into pruning hooks.” What idea then are we taught to conceive of war? Language
sinks

sinks under the prophetic writers, and creation seems unable to supply them with an adequate image, when they attempt to describe it's horrors. It is compared to a "threshing instrument of iron:" it is styled, "the rod of God's wrath; the hammer which breaketh the whole earth in pieces:" it is said to be a "dashing two kingdoms together, like potters' vessels," to the destruction of one—perhaps, of both. Ambition, interest, or a love of novelty, may, for a while, regard it as sport; but most assuredly, if it last long, it will be found a very serious matter; sweet, perhaps, in the mouth; but afterwards bitterness itself. It's effects may not be thought of at the time, while the wound is warm; but when it comes to grow cold, and fester, and perhaps is turning to a gangrene, they will be felt, and mourned, for ages and generations. Smarting under this fearful rod of the divine displeasure—so fearful, that a king of Israel preferred pestilence before it—dare we go on to violate the divine laws, in despite of grace, in defiance of power? "Do we provoke God to anger? Are we stronger than he?" Now, at least, let us forbear to add sin to sin.

And that more especially, because it is sin
which

which delivers this rod into the chastening hand of the Almighty. It is for the transgressions of a people, that God suffers these divisions of Reuben to arise within, and stirs up the spirit of princes to take peace from the earth without; that commercial states are shorn by him of their accumulated wealth (to use the energetic language of Isaiah), “with an hired razor;” that he wastes their strong men, and causes the loud lamentations of the widow and the fatherless to be heard in all their borders; that he commissions war to march through a land, with terror and amazement in the van; famine, disease, and desolation, in the rear. If, then, sin be the surfeit, and war the disease occasioned by it, instead of entering upon a salutary regimen, for the recovery of national health, shall we continue “daily to drink iniquity, like water?”—God forbid!

There is yet another argument, which may come home to the bosoms of many who hear me. In the host, when it goeth forth, you have, perhaps, a relation—a near one—a father—a brother—a son—a friend, dear as life itself—for whose safe return you are bound by the tenderest ties to wish, and in expectation of the

the event, between hope and fear, pass many an anxious and sorrowful hour. That event will turn upon the favour of heaven, which may depend in part, at least, upon your faith and obedience. The blessing may be denied you, because you deserve not that it should be granted. For relations and friends in such a situation, you probably sometimes become an humble advocate in the closet, and lift up your hands to God above, in a prayer of intercession; and we know that "the effectual fervent prayer" "availeth much." But in order to it's success, the hands so lifted up must be "pure hands;" the prayer must be that "of a righteous person." For this reason, if for no other—for your brethren and companions' sake—for the sake of your country, which involves in it all other relations and connections, be persuaded, that virtue and piety make the patriot; and therefore, "when the host goeth forth against" "thine enemies, then keep thee from every" "wicked thing."

These observations may suffice to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the text, that a time of war should be a time of reformation. But it may be asked, what is to be the nature of this reformation, and wherein is it to consist?

An

An answer may be returned to this question in the concluding words of the text; "Keep thee from *every* wicked thing;" forsake all evil, and be upon your guard against the return of it: but as some sins, like some diseases, are more prevalent and contagious at certain times, and in certain places, than others, mark well the abominations which discriminate and disgrace the age and the country in which you live, and be more especially upon your guard against *them*.

"Jehovah," saith the divine Psalmist, "looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men; from the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth; and considereth all their works." He looketh, then, on all the inhabitants of THIS land; he considereth all THEIR works. And when thus he looketh, what doth he behold?—

He beholdeth a great people, much degenerated, and daily more and more degenerating, from that noble simplicity, and manly integrity, which characterised the manners of their venerable ancestors; depraving their minds by the adoption of bad principles, enfeebling their bodies by vice and effeminacy, squandering
their

their fortunes at the gaming table, and then, by an act of violence, in the rage and fury of despair, rushing forth to meet their judge.

He beholdeth that virtue, which constitutes the excellency and dignity of the other sex, which is to it protection and ornament, a robe and a diadem, in danger of being totally laid aside, while the courts are crowded with trials for conjugal infidelity.

He beholdeth an enormous and senseless luxury, still increasing with the distresses of the times, accompanied by a dissipation, depriving it's votaries of attention to all that is wise, and great, and good.

He beholdeth his ordinances neglected; his sabbaths profaned; his sacraments disparaged; his temples forsaken; his ministers despised; his religion torn in pieces by contending sects, while there seems to be scarcely enough of it, for each of them to take a little; the infidel openly reviling, or covertly mocking; the faith once delivered to the saints deserted for the dregs of Socinianism; a set of men, styling themselves *philosophers*, wantoning in all the paradoxical absurdities of scepticism, leaving us, between them, neither matter nor spirit, neither body nor soul, and doing their best endeavours,

vours, in their lives and after their deaths, to render us a nation literally “without God in the world.”

I would not designedly aggravate—and I esteem it my bounden duty on this day not to extenuate—I fear you acknowledge the leading features of the times to be drawn from life.

And is it matter of wonder—is it matter of offence, that a day should be appointed by royal proclamation, “for a general FAST and
“humiliation before Almighty God, to be observed in most devout and solemn manner, by
“sending up our prayers and supplications to
“the divine Majesty, for obtaining pardon for
“our sins, and for averting those heavy judgments which our manifold provocations have
“so justly deserved?” Is it matter of wonder, that we should be punished by the revolt of our provinces? That we should meet with so many crosses, and find so many difficulties, in reducing them? That well appointed armies, under able generals, should, for so long a time together, have done nothing, or worse than nothing? That the common enemies should seize the opportunity? That their fleets should overspread the ocean, and appear upon our coasts, with the vauntings of Egypt—“I will
“pursue,

“pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the
“spoils?” That we should be left alone in the
contest, while the nations around us stand still
in silent amazement, waiting the event? Waste
not the time in fruitless complaints of this
misfortune, or that accident; this minister, or
that commander; but lay the blame where it
is due, upon national wickedness, which has
called down national calamities.

But we are still preserved; and preserved,
we trust, for a happy deliverance, at last, out of
all our troubles. At the critical moment of
our humiliation, when the conviction was ren-
dered complete, that “we could not trust in
“our bow, it was not our sword that could
“help us,” the destroying angel went forth,
and swept away the flower and strength of the
adverse navy by sickness. The insolence of the
enemy in another quarter has been since re-
pressed by the cool and determined valour of
our countrymen. The storm, that seemed to
be gathered, and ready to burst forth, in a
neighbouring kingdom, is passed over, and gone;
the time of rejoicing is there come, and the
cheerful voices of gratitude and industry re-
sound on every side. Nor doubt we, but that
the little temporary uneasinesses and disqui-
etudes

etudes here, those clouds in our English atmosphere, will, ere long, by the same prudential and salutary counsels, be dispersed, and serenity and tranquillity restored among us.

Let the prodigal then return unto his heavenly Father, and he will receive him. Let us take with us words, and turn to the Lord our God. Let us confess his power, adore his goodness, and intreat his mercy: let us revere his word, observe his sabbaths, attend his ordinances, and partake his sacraments: let our faith be blameless, and produce it's proper fruits, righteousness and holiness, temperance and purity, patience and resignation, self knowledge and self government: let wisdom and seriousness once more be the glory of Englishmen, and folly and vanity fly away—to the place from whence they came.

One thing is yet behind—and O that my voice could reach the remotest corners of the land, to proclaim to all it's inhabitants the wishes of Britain, that her children would dwell together in unity; that they would not employ their shining talents, and extensive attainments, merely in thwarting each other; that they would not revive old jealousies and animosities, or sow new ones; that they would abolish
enmity,

enmity, and strain every nerve in the prosecution of this only contention—who shall stand first, and do most service, in the cause of their King, and their Country.

Such is the nature of the reformation to be desired. Blessed are the eyes that shall see it; but still more blessed the hands that shall have contributed to effect it! Viewed in the aggregate, it may seem difficult—it may seem impossible. But let us divide the task among us, and it will become easy. Let each of us undertake for ONE, and let us begin TO-DAY.

“ Then will the Lord be gracious to his inheritance, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; the Lord will make our way prosperous, and we shall have good success;”
we have had some—we shall have more—
“ the Lord will give STRENGTH unto his people; the Lord will give his people the blessing of PEACE.”

enemy, and strain every nerve in the pursuit of this only contention—where shall I find him and do most service in the cause of their King and their Country?

Such is the nature of the reformation to be effected. Blessed are the eyes that shall see it, but still more blessed the hands that shall have continued to effect it! Viewed in the aggregate, it may seem difficult—it may seem impossible. But let us divide this task among us, and it will become easy. Let each of us undertake for one, and let us begin to-day. "Then will the Lord be gracious to his inheritance, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; the Lord will make our way prosperous, and we shall have good success;" we have had some—we shall have more—"the Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will give his people the blessing of peace."

Yet we must not be content with this. We must go on, and on, and on, until we have reached the goal of our journey. We must not stop at the first step, but we must go on, and on, and on, until we have reached the goal of our journey. We must not stop at the first step, but we must go on, and on, and on, until we have reached the goal of our journey.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
AT ST. MARY'S,
ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21, 1781.

A

S E R M O N

ATTACHED BEFORE THIS

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

17

AT ST. MARY'S

ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21, 1791.

S E R M O N IX.

ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

IN that part of Isaiah's Prophecy, which is comprehended between the thirteenth and twenty-third chapters, inclusively, the fate of several cities and countries is denounced. Stationed for the purpose, by divine command, in his watch-tower on mount Sion, and from thence casting his eye over the different states and empires in that part of the globe, the prophet is made to behold, in vision, the judgments of the Almighty prepared for them. He sees the mighty tempest sailing, in an awful manner, around the horizon, and falling successively, as the transgressions of each called it down, on Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, and Tyre. At length, as there is no respect of persons with God, he perceives the storm approaching

proaching Judea itself, and the whole weight of the divine displeasure impending on the chosen people, for their wickedness and apostacy. The desolation induced thereby on the holy land makes the subject of the twenty-fourth chapter, where it is described with a sublimity of sentiment and expression peculiar to the sacred writings. There is no need to detain you by a minute enquiry into the particular period supposed to be intended. Isaiah, as his learned translator and expositor has very justly observed, chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin that was to be brought upon the country by these great revolutions, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity both religious and civil; yet with intimations of a remnant to be saved, and a restoration to be at length effected, by a glorious establishment of the kingdom of God. — Having thus viewed this extensive and interesting scene in all its parts and all its consequences, he breaks forth, in the twenty-fifth chapter, into a song of praise, in which his mind seems to be more possessed with the prospect of future mercies, than with the recollection of the past. The heavenly strain is resumed

resumed in the twenty-sixth chapter, from whence the text is taken.

A chorus of the faithful is introduced, ascribing to God the glory of protecting them from their enemies: "We have a strong city; salvation shall he establish for walls and bulwarks." A procession is seen, advancing towards the temple, of such whose fidelity had been experienced in the day of public calamity; and the ministers there attending are commanded to give them an entrance into those sacred mansions of rest and peace. "Open ye the gates, and let the righteous nation enter; constant in the truth, stayed in mind, thou shalt preserve them in perpetual peace, because they have trusted in thee." From this example, an exhortation is addressed to the weak and the wavering, the timid and desponding, to repose their confidence in Him, who can bruise the strongest enemy under the feet of his people: "Trust ye in Jehovah for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is never failing protection. For he hath humbled those that dwell on high; the lofty city he hath brought her down: he hath brought her down to the ground, he hath levelled her with the dust. The foot shall trample upon her; the feet of the

“ the poor, the steps of the needy.” A question might be asked, why the good should suffer with the bad? Answer is returned, that nothing can befall *them*, which is not proportioned to their case, and calculated for their final benefit:

“ The way of the righteous is perfectly strait;

“ thou hast exactly levelled the path of the

“ righteous.” The confessors, thus persuaded

of the wisdom and equity of God’s proceedings,

go on to describe in what manner and with

what affections they received his chastisements,

passing the calm and silent hours of the night,

and the dawn of the morning, in devout medi-

tation and prayer, and waiting patiently till the

divine judgments should produce their proper

effect, in reclaiming and reforming those who

were the objects of them: “ Even in the way

“ of thy laws, O Jehovah, we have placed our

“ confidence in thy name; and in the remem-

“ brance of thee is the desire of our soul. With

“ my soul have I desired thee in the night;

“ yea, with my inmost spirit in the morn have

“ I sought thee. For when thy judgments are

“ in the earth, the inhabitants of the world

“ learn righteousness^b.”

^a See *Vitringa*.

^b The preceding citations are made from the Bishop of London’s translation, as expressing the sense of the original with greater force and precision.

Give me leave to offer a few reflections, suitable to the present occasion, on the Teacher, the School, and the Lesson. The Teacher is God; the School, that of AFFLICTION; the Lesson, RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I. When from these happy and sequestered seats we look abroad, and acquaint ourselves with what is now passing around us, a real scene presents itself, resembling that visionary one exhibited to Isaiah. The rage of man seems to be contending with that of the winds and waves, which shall produce the greatest degree of misery upon the earth: we hear the wailings of afflicted islands, and the cries of nations in distress. Aghast, amidst so much havoc and devastation, the mind shrinks back upon itself, and asks, anxiously asks, from whence proceeds such variety of wretchedness? Whose hand imposes this load of woe upon the human race? We must reply, in the prophetic language, it is "the *burthen* of the Lord," who governs the world which he created.

The primary design of these solemnities is to direct our thoughts, amidst the changes of this mortal life, to the superintending Providence of Him, who ordereth all things aright in heaven and earth. Destitute of this instructive and
comfortable

comfortable consideration, we might suppose the universe to be under the uncontrollable influence of fiends and furies, sporting themselves with the calamities of mankind; or we might deify chance, committing the affairs of it to the blindest of guides, instead of that one all-powerful divine intelligence, which in the same undivided instant both sees and hears all things. We might imagine worlds to have been propagated in succession, like vegetables, whose seed is in themselves; or, like animals, *ab Ovo*. We might fancy the evil principle to have been coeternal with, and independent on, the good one. We might argue from the attributes of God against the reality of evil, or from the prevalence of evil against the existence of God.

“ In like manner as a tree sheds it's seed into the neighbouring fields, and produces other trees; so the great vegetable, the world, or this planetary system, produces within itself certain seeds, which being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed of a world; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing from sun to sun, and star to star, it is at last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, and immediately sprouts up into a new system.—Or if, for the sake of variety (for I see no other advantage), we should suppose this world to be an animal; a comet is the egg of this animal: and in like manner as an ostrich lays it's egg in the sand, which, without any farther care, hatches the egg, and produces a new animal; so” *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 132.*

But

But the fact is, we cannot reasonably doubt the existence of either. For the existence of God, the argument from the effect to the cause, or from the work to the workmaster, though much labour has been employed in a posthumous volume to perplex and confound it, stands firm and irrefragable; nor can the incompetence of the human understanding (limited as it is in it's views of created nature) to judge of the use and expedience of some of the parts, ever be admitted by us, while we continue in our senses, as a proof that God did not make the whole. Eternal reason, surely, spoke by the mouth of the apostle, when he said, "Every house is builded
" by some man; but he that built all things is
" God". When we see an edifice, calculated to answer various purposes, and carrying in it all the marks of thought and design, we know it could not have built itself. The senseless materials could never have prepared and arranged themselves in such order. The timber could not have moved, cut and squared, out of the forest; nor could the marble have advanced to meet it, hewn and polished, from the quarry. We conclude therefore that the house must have had a builder: and we apply the argument, *a fortiori*,

* Heb. iii. 4.

to the case of the world, and it's Maker, God; the marks of thought and design being here infinitely more and greater. Tully scruples not to assert, that he who denies his assent to it does not deserve the name of a *man*. Yet, in this learned and intelligent age, have we seen a writer who deemed himself the deliverer of mankind from the bondage of superstition, and the light of the nations, endeavouring to doubt and dispute it away, by an application of the favourite topic, so thoroughly baffled, some years ago, in the case of miracles. "Will any man (says he) tell me, with a serious countenance, that an orderly Universe must arise from some thought and art like the human, because we have *experience* of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had *experience* of the origin of worlds." His own words are cited, because otherwise you could hardly perhaps have imagined it possible, that a philosopher should argue, "with a serious countenance," against creation, from the circumstance of his not having been present when it was effected, and because it is an event which does not happen every day. We are not to be induced, by such reasoning, to question the existence of God.

• Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 65.

As little can we question the existence of *evil*. For why are we assembled in this place, at this time? Alas, we hear of it, we see it, we feel it, daily and hourly. But as the deist will not believe in the Scriptures, so the atheist will not believe in the being of a God, till every difficulty can be solved—Verily, then, each must die in his unbelief. They should believe, upon sufficient evidence, and trust their Maker for the rest. The atheist cannot reconcile the notion of a God with the existence of evil. But there is sufficient evidence for the existence of both. Here let us rest. God had his reasons for permitting evil, or he would not have permitted it. If he hath been pleased to discover them in his word, or if we can discover them by a view of things compared with that word, it is well. If not, still, reasons there are; and what we cannot know now, we shall know hereafter. In the mean time, let it be repeated—God had his reasons for permitting evil; otherwise, he would not have permitted it—The whole compass of science does not furnish a sounder conclusion, resting on more substantial premises. Here fix your foot, and you sweep away at a stroke all the flimsy sophisms fabricated in the school of Epicurus, to entan-

gle and distress you on *this* part of the subject. —No; in all our sufferings, national as well as personal, whether proceeding from our enemies, from the elements, or from ourselves, we are to acknowledge the hand of heaven. The whole tenor of Scripture addresseth a community, upon such an occasion, as our church doth an individual, labouring under disease and infirmity. “Know this, that Almighty God is the
“ Lord of life and death, and of all things to
“ them pertaining, as youth, strength, health,
“ age, weakness, or sickness. Wherefore, what-
“ soever your sickness is, know you certainly,
“ that it is God’s visitation.” Philosophy shews us, there are second causes, physical and moral; and the more philosophy can explain of their nature, properties, and manner of agency, the better; success attend her labours! But religion assures us, that as they exist by the power, so they act under the direction and controul of the First.

Why, then, often find we in ourselves (for we often do find in ourselves) a certain shyness and backwardness in making this acknowledgement? There is a vulgar and canting way of making it, which is disgusting enough, and incurs the suspicion of hypocrisy; but still, in
sobriety

fobriety and seriousness, upon proper occasions, it ought to be made. Is there not a deficiency of *faith* in the case? “Ye have heard of the *“patience of Job:”* consider likewise the operation of his *faith*. The Sabeans and Chaldeans despoil him of part of his property; the lightning consumes more of it; and an hurricane from the wilderness buries his children under the ruins of the house, where they were feasting together. But what says he? He mentions none of them—“The LORD gave, and the “LORD hath taken away’.”

There may be another reason. To acknowledge punishment, is to confess guilt. In owning the judgments of God to be upon us, we own that we have made him our enemy; and as the reflection is disagreeable, we fondly endeavour to persuade ourselves, that our sufferings are owing to *some* other cause—to *any* other cause. But the just and prudent inference should run thus. Have we made him our enemy? Let us lose no time in making him our friend; since, when we are rolling onward to the brink of the precipice, our fall will not be prevented by shutting our eyes. Let us add to our faith humility, and honestly confess ourselves to be

¹ Job i. 21.

— what God knows we are. This leads us to the

II. Consideration proposed, namely, the School in which God is teaching us, that of AFFLICTION.

But why the School of Affliction? Is there no other School, in which we may be taught? Does God delight in the sufferings of men? Certainly not. We have his own gracious word to assure us, that “he does not afflict *willingly*.” He proceeds to do it, like a tender and affectionate parent, with reluctance. “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are “kindled together.”—Can the force of words go farther?

There is another School, in which we once were placed, under the tuition of mercy, and drawn by the cords of a man, that the *goodness* of God might lead us to repentance. But if prosperity does not encourage us to be virtuous, adversity must compel us to be so. If we become not sensible of heaven’s blessings by the enjoyment of them, we must be made sensible

^a Lam. iii. 33.

^b Hof. xi. 8.

by the loss. Foolishness is sometimes bound in the heart of a nation, as well as that of a child, and the rod of correction must drive it out¹.

“ Misery and sin (says a great writer of the present age) were produced together. The depravation of human will was followed by a disorder of the harmony of nature; and, by that Providence, which often places antidotes in the neighbourhood of poisons, vice was checked by misery, lest it should swell to universal and unlimited dominion.” In a word, physical evil was ordained to be the punishment of moral.

But this punishment is seldom inflicted, without previous notice. Watchmen are generally sent to sound an alarm, and faithful witnesses are raised up, by their writings and by their conduct to bear their testimony. Indeed, the Word of God is a standing admonition to ages and generations, not only by precepts, threats, and promises, instructing, rebuking, and exhorting, but in the historical and prophetical parts of it exhibiting a variety of cases and precedents, among which any nation, at any period of its existence, may, upon searching, meet with one applicable to its own state. So that whatever calamity befalls us, the Holy Book, if we will but look into it,

¹ Prov. xxii. 15.

may be found reproving us, as St. Paul reproved the mariners in the ship; "Sirs, ye should have hearkened to me, and ye would not have suffered this harm and loss*."

The first chastisements are of a mild and gentle nature, as it were whispering repentance and reformation in our ears. To generous and well-nurtured spirits the slightest appearances of displeasure are sufficient. When the heart is hardened, more rigorous measures must be taken, and heavier punishments brought forward. Majestic, and tremendous, God arises to judgment. The sound of his thunder is heard at a distance, and all the prognostics appear of an approaching storm.

Divine justice, though sure, is slow; and now, as of old, the long-suffering of God waits with so much patience and forbearance, that as in the life of man there is a certain part, when, for some years together, perceiving little or no alteration in himself and those about him, he almost disbelieves, at least he seems willing to forget, that he shall grow old and die; so by the firm establishment and long subsistence of a nation, remaining nearly the same, through the repeated vicissitudes of peace and war, we are tempted to

* Acts xxviii. 21.

exclaim

exclaim, "Where is the threat of his coming?" "For all things continue as they were¹." But let us not so deceive ourselves. The nation, as well as the man, is verging apace to that period of life, which is to be labour and sorrow: the motion, however gradual and imperceptible for some time, will be dreadfully accelerated in it's latter stages; and perhaps, after incessant warnings and admonitions, the grim spectre will suddenly appear in all his terrors, at an hour when we look not for him.

In these particular judgments, as in that last and general one, "God hath appointed a day^m." And although he hath reserved such appointments in his own power, yet are there symptoms of the disorder coming to a crisis, certain "signs of the times," by which they who are conversant in the Scriptures, and the history of declining empires, may form shrewd conjectures, partly from the *moral*, and partly from the *political* situation of a people.

National, like personal depravity, is progressive, and, at a stated time, attains to maturity—in the language of Holy Writ, it is FULL; when a voice issues from the throne, "Put in

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 4.

^m Acts xvii. 31.

“ the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; the wickedness is great.”

The wickedness of a country may be styled *great*, when it has abolished the old, virtuous, manly, national character, and introduced one of an opposite complexion, having established it's dominion by fashion, and ruling with an high hand over all orders and degrees, no longer subject to fear or shame, but becoming matter to itself either of glory, or of mirth; trampling under foot, and spurning at the very name of that discipline, which should check and reform it; according to those most significant and ever memorable words of the Roman historian, containing in them the substance of a volume. “ Ad illa mihi se quisque acriter intendat animum, quæ vita, qui mores fuerint: per quos viros, quibusque artibus, et partum et auctum imperium sit. Labente deinde paullatim disciplinâ, velut defidentes primo mores sequatur animo: deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint; tum ire cœperint præcipites; donec ad hæc tempora, quibus nec VITIA nostra, nec REMEDIA pati possumus, perventum est.”

When dissipation and immorality reign triumphant in a Christian country, they will soon dis-

^a Joel. iii. 13.

^o Liv. Præfat.

card those principles by which they feel themselves condemned, and adopt the system of infidelity. Revelation, after having been for a while “holden captive in unrighteousness,”^p disarmed and disabled by heretical and false glosses, will at length be openly denied and rejected—like Him, who dared to thwart the pleasures of Herodias—first imprisoned, and then beheaded.

Josephus gives the following account of his unhappy countrymen, at the time immediately preceding their final destruction. “That time,” says he, “abounded in all manner of iniquity, so “that none was left unperpetrated. Yea, though “a man should have endeavoured to invent some “new species of it, yet could he have fallen upon “none, that was not then in vogue^q.” Thus much for *practice* — Now for *faith* — “It “was familiar with them to make a jest of “divine things, and to deride, as so many “senseless tales, and juggling impostures, the “sacred oracles of their prophets, though then “fulfilling before their eyes, and upon themselves^r.” The chair of the scorner, probably, was regularly taken, and portions of the Word of

^p Rom. i. 18.

^q Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 8. Edit. Hudson.

^r Ibid. lib. iv. cap. 6.

God tossed about upon the tongues of prophaneness and impurity, as a Sabbath-evening employment, for the diversion of the rabble. — After such an account, we naturally expect to hear of the event which soon followed— The carcase was thrown out, and the eagles flew to their prey.

From the *political* state of a nation, common sense, as well as the experience of past ages, forbids us to augurate favourably, when having been drained of it's treasures by a long series of expensive and ruinous wars, it is, in consequence, oppressed by an accumulated and enormous load of debt; the very interest of which is with difficulty discharged, by all the variety of taxes and imposts, that ability and ingenuity can devise: when the body is grown too large and extensive for the head to govern; and the distant provinces, revolting, occasion, for the purpose of reducing them, a war still more expensive and ruinous than any of the former: when the ancient and avowed enemies of such a country, taking advantage of it's situation, combine their forces to support the rebellion against it, aiming to extinguish it's glory, the subject of their admiration, and to appropriate it's commerce, the object of their envy; while
of

of the surrounding nations, some stand unconcerned spectators, or perhaps look towards a share of the spoil, and others, even it's oldest friends and allies, after having for some time secretly assisted, at length openly join the confederacy: when the war becomes one of procrastination and finance, each endeavouring to exhaust the resources of the other, so that the conqueror will probably fall breathless on the body of his antagonist: when, instead of unity and unanimity at home, the counsels and operations of a government, in these perilous circumstances, are clogged and impeded by everlasting contests for places of power and emolument; so that apprehensions arise, where there should least of all be the appearance of any ground for them, that the public interest has been sacrificed to that of a party: when through the prevalence of licentious tenets, for many years with unwearied pains disseminated, and now producing their proper fruits, in an impatience of all law and restraint, discontents, divisions, and searchings of heart abound, ready, at every opportunity, to break forth into tumult and confusion; as it happened to the wretched Jerusalem, that while the Roman armies were applying the instruments of destruction, in every direction,

direction, from without, a faction of Zealots within set fire to the City and the Temple.

If the foregoing particulars shall be judged applicable, in any degree, to ourselves, and you shall be of opinion, that the Almighty is indeed thus teaching us in the school of affliction at this time, you will deem it neither inexpedient, nor unseasonable, to consider

III. The Lesson designed to be taught, under this severe course of discipline.

The representation given above has been given, not to produce despondency, but to rouse attention ; not to discourage, but only to alarm. If a nation sleep, it must be awakened. It were cruel, in such circumstances, to be afraid of *disturbing* it. Affliction will not have wrought the effect intended, till we shall awake to RIGHTEOUSNESS, and learn, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace and welfare. If the sense of danger be not quick, the efforts to escape it will be ineffectual.

That it *may* be escaped, we have no reason to doubt. For though the appointment of a general and eternal judgment be absolute, the time fixed for these partial and temporal visitations is always conditional. — “ Yet forty days, and “ Nineveh shall be overthrown’,” cried a true

• Jonah iii. 4.

Prophet,

Prophet, at the command of his God, in the streets of that great and wicked city. But, at the voice of the Prophet, Nineveh repented, and subsisted more than three times forty years afterwards. It is indeed a rule in the divine proceedings, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them'."

By repentance, through faith in our Redeemer, we disarm the wrath of God, because we cease to be any longer the objects against which it is levelled. Should we continue finally impenitent, like those mentioned by Isaiah in the verse following the text, who, "when the arm of Jehovah is lifted up, will not see," then must we be destroyed, that other nations, admonished by our example, may be the more afraid to offend. But if we ourselves *take* the warning which otherwise we shall *give*, then will the great end of Providence in sending these calamities upon us be answered. We shall be reformed, we shall be pardoned, we shall be spared. We shall leave our dross and scum behind, and come forth out of the fire, bright and burnished.

* Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

Physical evil, by being made the punishment of moral evil, becomes the cause of moral good. And, as things are now constituted since the fall, perhaps there is a very small portion only of moral good among men, which does not owe its origin to this very cause. “ If pleasure were
“ not followed by pain, who would forbear it ?
“ If the inconvenience of suffering wrong were
“ not greater than the satisfaction of doing it,
“ when would mankind have submitted to the
“ restraint of laws ? Were it not for a consci-
“ ousness of being liable to suffer the miseries we
“ relieve, how would charity wax cold ! And
“ how few would fix their attention upon the
“ future, if they were not discontented with the
“ present ! In a world like ours, where our
“ senses assault us, and our hearts betray us, we
“ should pass on from crime to crime, heedless
“ and remorseless, if misery did not stand in our
“ way, and our own pains admonish us of our
“ folly.” These are, in substance, the observa-
tions of the same great writer, to whom I have
before alluded, who is so well known, that he
need not be named. And most valuable observa-
tions they are. They reconcile the mind to suf-
fering evil, and unfold the mysteries of that di-
vine chymistry, by which good may be extracted
from

from it. I cannot forbear reciting from the same place the following just and beautiful description of the whole process of this matter in an *individual*, from youth to age, which, in passing, you will be pleased to apply, for yourselves, to the case of a *nation*. And may the issue, with respect to our own, be the same!

“ In childhood, while our minds are yet un-
“ occupied, Religion is impressed upon them;
“ and the first years of almost all who have been
“ well educated, are passed in a regular discharge
“ of the duties of piety. But as we advance
“ forward into the crowds of life, innumerable
“ delights solicit our inclinations, and innume-
“ rable cares distract our attention. The time
“ of youth is passed in noisy frolics; manhood is
“ led on from hope to hope, and from project to
“ project. The dissoluteness of pleasure, the in-
“ ebriation of success, the ardour of expecta-
“ tion, and the vehemence of competition, chain
“ down the mind alike to the present scene; nor
“ is it remembered how soon this mist of trifles
“ must be scattered, and the bubbles which float
“ upon the rivulet of life be lost for ever in the
“ gulph of eternity. To this consideration scarce
“ any man is awakened, but by some pressing
“ and resistless evil. The death of those from
“ whom

“whom he derived his pleasures, or to whom he
 “destined his possessions, some disease which
 “shews him the vanity of all external acqui-
 “sitions, or the gloom of age which intercepts
 “his prospects of long enjoyment, forces him to
 “fix his hopes upon another state; and when
 “he has contended with the tempests of life till
 “his strength fails him, he flies at last to the
 “shelter of Religion.”

Late therefore though it be, let us yet apply
 our hearts unto wisdom. Had it been done sooner,
 it might have been done in a way more agree-
 able, and more to our credit. But let us neglect
 to do it no longer. The instruction, which we
 have failed to reap from benefits conferred, let
 us, however, reap from calamities inflicted, and
 not subject ourselves to the reproach uttered
 formerly by the Apostle to his Galatians;
 “Have ye suffered so many things in vain?—If
 “it be yet in vain.”

It is not the business of the day to call our
 governors to account, but ourselves; to censure
 their measures, but our own. There is enough to
 correct and reform, at home. At least, let us
 begin there. We shall have no leisure, for some

^u See the paper in the *Idler*, entitled, Physical Evil moral Good.
 vol. ii. p. 206.

^w Gal. iii. 4.

time,

time, to look abroad. “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren* :” but be not curious to find fault with others, and careless to amend thyself. Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, let the most concerning question be the leading one—“Lord, is it I?”

Matters of mere science often terminate, as they begin, in speculation. But Righteousness is an *art*, and must be acquired, like other arts, by practice, by use, by habit. It resembles a lesson in music, which is to be learned indeed by the book; but no man is reputed to have learned it, till he can readily take it from thence, and perform it on the instrument. “He that DOETH Righteousness is righteous.”

It consisteth not solely in going through the services of this day; in acts of mourning and humiliation. They are preparatives, and excellent ones; but they are no more. To what purpose confession of sin, if sin be not forsaken? What avail incitements to conversion, if conversion do not follow upon them? Why submit to medicine, if we intend to continue in those irregularities, which first caused, and will ever perpetuate the disorder? Alas, it is labour lost

* Luke xxii. 32.

† Matt. xxvi. 22.

* 1 John iii. 7.

— it is an aggravation of our crime — it is mockery — “ it is iniquity — even THIS solemn “ meeting’.”

To conclude — Righteousness is not partial ; it is not limited to this virtue, or that person in a community, but extends to all the possible duties of all men in every station. The chastisements of God (as a learned pious prelate of the last century well remarks) “ have a general “ aim. It is not their design, that we should “ quit one ill course to pursue another ; that “ we should abhor idols, and commit sacrilege ; “ fly from superstition, and run into prophane- “ ness ; cry out of oppression, and bring in “ confusion ; suppress Popery, to encourage “ schism and faction ? From universal refor- “ mation we may expect universal deliver- “ ance’.” The effect of SUCH Righteousness will be PEACE ; to procure the re-establishment of which among Christian nations, do these judgments of the Almighty, now in the world, address themselves to it’s inhabitants of all ranks, ages, and conditions, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, clergy and laity.

^a Isaiah i. 13.

^b See a Sermon of Bishop *Brownrig*, Vol. II. p. 172. from whence some of the sentiments in this Discourse were taken.

But

But chiefly, to you, O ye PRINCES, do they call, and their voice is to you that are judges of the earth, deputed by the sovereign of the universe to rule his people in the integrity of your hearts, and guide them by the skilfulness of your hands. View the state of Christendom, often becoming, for years together, the theatre on which your subjects are sent forth, thousands after thousands, to inflict and suffer, in their turns, the manifold calamities of war. Tell it not in the realms of Hindostan; publish it not in the streets of Constantinople; make it not known in the new discovered islands of the distant sea; lest infidels triumph, and savages laugh us to scorn. Hearken what the Lord God speaks concerning you. He speaks to you out of the whirlwind, in a very audible manner. While you are endeavouring to destroy each other, the fury of the elements, resembling the last convulsions of departing nature, desolates the choicest possessions of you all. In one part of the picture appear blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; in the other, the heavens are in confusion, and the foundations of the earth shake.—If there be any fear of God, by whom ye reign; if there be any consolation in Christ, by whose name ye are called; if

there be any bowels of love and mercy ; pity the miseries of poor mankind, and wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow ; agree to let the horrid scene be closed, and restore joy and comfort to a lamenting world. Millions now on earth shall break forth in your praise, and generations yet unborn shall call you blessed.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL,
BEFORE THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
ON THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1783.

S. F. R. M. O. N.

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S E R M O N X.

2 THESS. III. 13.

Be not weary in well doing.

THE honour of being thus called to plead the cause of a Society, whose reputation must run coeval with that of religion and virtue, is somewhat qualified by the consideration, that the subject has been already treated by so many persons of superior eminence and ability. The motives that have place in compositions of other kinds, can have none here; since in vain would it be for the preacher to hope, that he shall be able either to invent new matter, or polish the old into new beauty and lustre.

Discouraging, however, as this reflection may at first sight appear, it affords no solid reason why such anniversaries should be discontinued or slighted. Successive generations of men require successive information; and the same men, though they may want to be *informed* but once, may want often to be *reminded*.

Good impressions, we know, are impaired in much less time than that of a year, by the cares and pleasures of life, and need therefore to be frequently retouched. Many hear with more effect than they read: many also may hear, who do not read at all: and of those who do read, numbers may read a new sermon, who never read the old (though "the old be "better;") and by coming into new hands, it may procure us new friends and allies. Fresh hints, and those of consequence, may be afforded by the occurrences and publications of the times. Fresh accounts are communicated of the progress made, to encourage the desponding; or of the farther supplies requisite, to give the opulent and generous an opportunity of furnishing them.

It is matter of general complaint, that the fervour and zeal which, at the commencement of a charitable institution, diffused warmth and splendour on all around, are but too apt, by degrees, to languish and die away, unless some expedient be employed periodically to revive and cherish the holy flame. Let me congratulate the Society on the additional circumstances of solemnity, devised, with equal benevolence and taste, to grace their anniversary,

in

in the place where we are now assembled. The eyes and ears of all present will attest the propriety with which they have been adapted to answer the purpose in view.

And respecting that part of the entertainment to be provided by the preacher, it is but doing justice to the subject to say, that though in itself old, and "what we have heard from the beginning," to the well-disposed mind it is ever new. No man is the less pleased to receive a visit from a much-loved friend, on the account of his having received many before. No man nauseates the meal of to-day, because one composed of the like salutary viands was served up to him a year ago. Should he do so, we well know where the fault must lie; not in the quality of the meat, but in the appetite of the eater.

To prevent any thing of the kind from taking place, let us strengthen and encourage one another by applying, as we may with great propriety do, the exhortation of the Apostle to those, who are engaged in forwarding the designs of the Society. Let us endeavour to shew, that all such are engaged in *well-doing*, and therefore, that they ought not to be *weary*.

Manifold,

Manifold, in the present state of the world, are the wants of mankind; and the virtues of one part of the species consist much in relieving the necessities of the other. It is the leading feature in *his* character, on whom angelic as well as human spirits are directed to fix their attention, that "He went about, doing good;" in other words, as the explanation immediately follows, "healing all that were oppressed of the "devil," and afflicted with the maladies and calamities introduced into the world by sin, of which that evil spirit was the author. An idea of a similar nature is always supposed to be conveyed, when we say of any person departed, that "he did much good in his life-time." Nay, to the great Governor of the Universe, we have no other way of giving the glory due, than by proclaiming, as we are enjoined to do, that "Jehovah is good, and that his tender "mercies are over all his works^a." Godlike are the labours of Charity; and they, who are employed in them, are, without all doubt, employed in *well-doing*.

The external indigence of our fellow-creatures, as it strikes directly upon our senses, is apt to be first and principally noticed. The

^a Acts x. 38.

^b Ps. cxlv. 9.

case of a brother or a sister, destitute of food and raiment, of habitation, health, and comfort, calls upon us, for commiseration and assistance, in a voice scarcely to be resisted by the *man*, much less by the *Christian*. And to the praise of our age and nation be it spoken, no pains are spared to relieve all such objects of bodily distress.

But the plan of the Society extends farther, and penetrates deeper into the constitution of human nature. It enters the cottage of clay, and reaches the inhabitant contained within, the immortal guest doomed for a while to sojourn here below; succouring the infirmities and necessities, to which, during such its temporary abode upon earth, the soul of man is become subject. For there is an inward and spiritual, as well as an outward and visible poverty; and that we may conceive proper ideas of the former, the sacred writers have described it under figures and images borrowed from the latter. There is a species of food necessary for the support of the mind, after which it is said to “hunger and thirst.” There are garments, with which the spirits of just men appear clothed: and there is a state of the soul, which, through all its powers and faculties,

ties, is a state of health and salvation. Nothing of a corporeal kind was certainly intended in that reproof given by the Spirit to the church of Laodicea—"Thou sayest I am rich, and
 "increased in goods, and have need of nothing;
 "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and
 "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked".
 An attention to this intellectual distress and misery, and the proper methods of relieving them, is excellent in proportion to the value of the subject, and the more dangerous consequences of their being neglected; and therefore constitutes the sublimer part of charity. When Christ healed bodily diseases, he did it principally that he might manifest his ability to heal those that are spiritual.—"That ye may know
 "the Son of Man hath power upon earth to
 "forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the
 "palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go to
 "thine house". With particular disorders of the bodily frame some are afflicted, and some are not: and they whom our Lord healed of one, yet died afterwards of another. The saying in which *all* men are interested, and which ought therefore "of all men to be received,"

^a Rev. iii. 17.

^b Matt. ix. 6.

is, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to
"SAVE SINNERS."

But surely in vain did he come, unless the *knowledge* of this salvation be conveyed to those whom it concerns. This knowledge is not born with us, nor are we to expect it by inspiration from above. Heaven has revealed it once, but left it from thenceforth to be communicated by man to man. He whose lamp has been kindled, is enjoined to kindle those of his descendants, that so the Gospel may run and be glorified, to the end of time. This indeed has been the process ordained from the beginning: for of the patriarchal religion, derived from Adam by tradition, may that be said, which the Psalmist hath said of the same religion in sum and substance, as it was republished in writing by Moses. "God established a testimony, he appointed a law, which he commanded our fathers that they should make known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments ^d."

¹ Tim. i. 15.

^d Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

Through

Through the degeneracy and apostacy of nations, losing the knowlege originally imparted to their ancestors, it will sometimes happen, that parents can no longer instruct their progeny, or educate them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in which they themselves perhaps have not been educated. Ignorance, instead of knowlege, is then transmitted from generation to generation, of which each grows worse than the preceding; till, at length, “darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the inhabitants thereof;” a darkness that may indeed be *felt*, and that ought to be bewailed, as it is a sure forerunner of ruin and excision.—“My people are destroyed for lack
“of knowlege: because thou hast rejected
“knowlege, I will also reject thee; seeing
“thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I
“will also forget thy children^f.”

But suppose this not altogether the case. It is among the evils of external poverty, and one of the greatest of those evils, to be the cause of that other poverty which is internal. The poor, unless care be taken of them in this respect by the rich, are by that very circumstance often deprived of the means of know-

* Isai. lx. 2.

^f Hof. iv. 6.

lege. Much of their time is of necessity otherwise employed; and when they enjoy any little intervals of leisure, opportunities and instructors are wanting.

It may be said, perhaps, "What occasion have the poor for knowledge?" For knowledge of many kinds, none at all: they are better without it: ignorance for them is preferable. But there is an ignorance — that above-mentioned — which is attended with effects very prejudicial to the welfare of society in this world, and that of individuals in the next — productive of vice and ill manners, of confusion, and every evil work. Good may be known, without being practised; but it cannot be practised, if it be not known.

"If we enquire" — says a late writer, in his admirable treatise on the subject of the *Poor* —
"if we enquire into the state of those countries,
"where the people are grossly ignorant, we shall
"find the most unhappy consequences arising
"from their deplorable situation, The savages
"in America are but in a small degree raised
"above the irrational tribes; the populace in
"Portugal, whose whole knowledge consists in
"a credulous superstition, are now the most
"cruel and barbarous people in Europe; and
"the

“ the lower class in London, who are in gene-
“ ral very ignorant, are ripe for every crime.
“ Had the same degree of knowlege, of which
“ some complain as improper for the common-
“ alty, been imparted to them, there is reason
“ to believe it would have civilized their man-
“ ners, and corrected their morals. Some of
“ our late eloquent and judicious historians
“ have set in a very striking view the barbarity
“ and misery of the middle ages, arising almost
“ wholly from the ignorance which then over-
“ spread Europe.

“ Wherever gross ignorance prevails, there
“ either gross vices or absolute stupidity will
“ abound. It is by a school education chiefly
“ that we receive the rudiments of knowlege.
“ Though men may be, and it is hoped are
“ improved by public discourses, yet, unless
“ they have received some previous instruction,
“ they can reap but little benefit from them.
“ It appears then to be an object of great im-
“ portance to the public, as well as to indivi-
“ duals, that the meanest of the people should
“ be taught to read, and be instructed in the
“ duties of religion and morality. This seems
“ to be one of the most necessary steps towards
“ the civilizing of a country ; and this instruc-
“ tion

“tion may be given at an early period, before
 “they are fit for labour, or at times when they
 “are not otherwise employed.”

There must ever be in all communities a considerable majority of poor, to perform the various labours of life. In return for their temporals, we should communicate to them of our spirituals. If they, by their labours, furnish us with “the meat that perisheth,” it is but reasonable that we, especially as it can be done without much labour, should supply them with “that meat which endureth for ever.” If they “give us to drink,” we should in return present them with “the water springing up “unto eternal life.” Their spiritual necessities are the same with those of the rich; they have equally souls to be saved, and stand therefore equally in need of the knowledge requisite to save them.

This being perfectly known to the God of the spirits of all flesh, he has not been unmindful of them in the dispensations of his grace, but has adapted his Gospel to the wants of all alike.

The evidence, on which it's authority stands, is not veiled from vulgar sight by the clouds of

* *M'Farlan's* Inquiries concerning the Poor, p. 246.

metaphysical subtlety; it depends not on intricate arguments, and tedious consequences, which the poor have neither leisure to study, nor ability to understand. Jesus could not have performed the miracles which he did perform, unless God had been with him; and if God were with him, then the doctrines taught by him, under the sanction of those miracles, were also of God. The Apostles believed in him, because they saw his mighty works; and we believe them when they tell us so, because they could not have deceived the world if they would, and would not have done it if they could. A little plain common sense sees all this; and more need not be seen, to induce any man to become a Christian.

As the evidence is stated, so the doctrines of salvation are taught, with a condescension to the capacities of all. To render them at the same time intelligible and agreeable, they are delivered in the pleasing form of history, and illustrated by comparisons and similitudes taken from the most familiar objects in the natural world, and the concerns of ordinary life. A poor man is thus taught, in a week, more than philosophy could teach those that were most learned in it, for a series of ages: he is taught

taught to know God, and his various dispensations to mankind: and with respect to morals, and the duties of society, he is taught—what every wise government would wish that it's citizens might all be taught.

Accordingly, we find it given as one mark of the divinity of the Gospel, and as the circumstance which discriminates it from the wisdom of the world, that it was preached by Christ and his Apostles to the poor. Not for the reasons insinuated by unbelievers, ancient and modern, that they were either afraid or ashamed to preach it to the rich and the learned; but because the former were clear from many prejudices and evil passions which adhered to the latter, and therefore were better disposed to receive it. These received it first, and had the honour to lead the way to the others, who followed after, in due time, from every rank and order of life, as they could be brought to give it a fair and impartial hearing. But be it ever remembered, when this argument is under discussion, that the truth of God must finally rest upon it's proper evidence, and not upon the incident of it's being accepted or rejected by those to whom it is proposed. Such acceptance or rejection must afterwards be ac-

counted for, from the different tempers, dispositions, and circumstances of mankind. And it requires but a very moderate degree of acquaintance with human nature, to assign adequate reasons, why, when the same doctrine is preached to two different persons, one should put it from him, and depart "sorrowful," while the other embraces it, and "goes on his way rejoicing."

If it be enquired, "Whether the poor be capable of making any considerable proficiency in the school of Christ?" Experience will answer in the affirmative. With a little plain instruction, they can apprehend the articles of faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed, and the rules of practice as laid down in the Commandments. They can learn to trust in God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: they can give him thanks for what they have, and pray to him for what they want. They can love their Saviour, and for his sake shew kindness to their brethren, whom he has redeemed. One may often behold, among the lower ranks, that attention to the distresses of each other, that earnest desire, and, what is of more worth, that unwearied endeavour, to remove or alleviate them, which do

do credit to the human heart, wherever they are found. A poor person, after labouring through the day, will pass the night in watching with a sick neighbour; while the rich pursue their pleasures, the scholar retires to his library, and the virtuoso to his cabinet, safe from the importunity of the wretched, and where the voice of misery never penetrates. Let not the pride of wealth or science look down with contempt upon the poor, since they often possess and exhibit that charity which is the end of knowledge, the comfort of society, the balm of life; and by his proficiency in which, every man is to be tried, at the judgment of the great day. — “Hath not GOD chosen the poor?” Let not MAN, then, “despise them.”

Upon these grounds it is, that the Society has been employed, for near a century, in disseminating Christian Knowledge among the poor. Thousands and ten thousands of children have been snatched from the jaws of ruin, from ignorance and vice, and educated in the fear of God, in the Charity-Schools originally fostered and reared; through Great-Britain and Ireland, by their parental care, and which at this time contain above forty thousand. To this part of

the plan the following testimony is borne by a celebrated prelate, in a charge delivered so long ago as the year 1716, though published only a few months since. He is speaking of the great and necessary duty of *catechising* — “The
 “late encouragers of *Charity-Schools* are never
 “enough to be commended for their care and
 “diligence on this head, by which they have
 “deserved well of God and man, and have
 “done the church of England and the pure
 “religion of Christ excellent service; and
 “verily they shall not fail of their reward^b.”

A multitude of Bibles, Common-Prayer-Books, and a variety of Religious Tracts, adapted to the capacities and spiritual exigencies of the poor, amounting, within the space of the last fifty years only, to near three millions, have been printed and distributed by the Society, not only through England and every part of Wales, the isles of Scilly, and of Man; but their care has been extended to the Greek Church in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt, as well as to the conversion of the Heathens in the East-Indies, where Schools

^b The learned and eloquent Bishop *Atterbury*'s Charge to the Diocese of Rochester, in Mr. *Nichols*'s publication of the Epistolary Correspondence, &c. vol. ii. p. 260.

and Missions have been established for that purpose. Translations of the proper books having been made, the inhabitants of these different countries have had opportunities of hearing and celebrating, "every one in his own language, the wonderful works of God."

I do not enlarge upon these several objects of the Society's bounty, because, in general, the world is now well acquainted with the nature of them; and the particulars may be seen in the annual account of it's proceedings. That *much* good has been effected, is known to all those who have been concerned in carrying these benevolent designs into execution, or who have by any means happened to fall within the reach of their influence; but *how* much, it never will, nor can be known, till manifested by that day, which shall manifest all things. The diligence of the husbandman, with the quantity and quality of the seed sown, will then best appear, when the harvest shall crown his toil, and "the valleys stand so thick with corn, that they shall laugh and sing."

Thus engaged in *well-doing*, be not ye, therefore, *weary*; "for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not." Look back with joy and pleasure on what *has* been done; look forward

ward with hope and confidence on what *may* be done. The adversary is not weary of exerting his endeavours to suppress and extinguish the religious spirit among us; be not ye weary of exerting yours (as they always have been exerted) to cherish and support it. Consider the prospect which presented itself to the first preachers of the Gospel, when they entered upon the task of *promoting Christian Knowledge*; and consider the event: remember the *mustard-seed*, and view the *tree* which it has produced. Ye are fellow-labourers with them; and according to the measures of his grace, and the course of his dispensations, Christ will be with *you*, as he was with them. Apostolical is your work, and suitable will be your reward. Go on, then, and prosper, in the name of the Lord; looking forward to that triumphant hour, when the scene shall open, of which that now before us may serve to convey some faint resemblance; when the innumerable company of those rescued by your charity from the hands of the destroyer, and numbered among the children of God, shall be seen clothed in the robes of righteousness and salvation, arranged in shining circles around the throne, and heard singing Glory to their Redeemer, who sitteth thereon, for ever and ever.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT THE
OPENING OF A NEW ORGAN
IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY,
ON THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1784.

HERMAN O. N.

OPENING OF A NEW ORGAN

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTON

S E R M O N XI.

PSALM LVII. 3.

Awake up, my glory; awake, lute and harp!

THE sound of that noble instrument which for the first time we have this day heard, is in perfect unison with the words of the text. It is intended for the same purpose, and performs the same office. It calls upon us to employ all our powers and faculties in the service of him who bestowed them; to celebrate the praises of God, and give the glory due to the world's Creator and Redeemer. For this end man was formed: but it is an end which, in the present state of his nature, he is by no means disposed at all times to answer as he should do. Alive to earth, he is often dead to heaven. Troubled about many things, to the one thing needful he is apt to be inattentive. He sleepeth, and must be awakened. “Awake up, therefore, my
“glory;

“glory; awake lute and harp! I myself will
“awake right early.” Let the instrument
accompany the voice, and the heart accompany
both.

In the constitution of man, as the all wise artist has been pleased to frame it, there are certain tones of the voice, by which the affections of the mind naturally express themselves. The tone of sorrow is mournful and plaintive; the notes of joy, exulting and jubilant. St. James therefore spake with the strictest propriety, when he said, “Is any afflicted? let him pray; is any
“merry? let him sing.” When the spirits are raised by good news, or any other very pleasing consideration, every one whose actions are unobserved, and therefore unrestrained, will break forth into singing. It is the proper expression of pleasure; it is “the voice of joy and health
“in the dwellings of the righteous.” Who shall contest THEIR right so to declare and make their feelings known? They have been in possession of the privilege, ever since the hour when at the creation of the world, “the morning stars

^a Music was used by the *Pythagoreans* to dissipate the dulness of the mind at first waking in the morning: and it is said, I think, of good Bishop *Kenn*, that immediately on rising from his bed, he seized his guitar, and played some sprightly strain, for this purpose.

^b James v. 13.

“sing

“ sang together, and all the sons of God shouted
“ for joy “ ;” and they will be found possessed
of it, in the day, when, for the redemption of
the world, saints and angels shall sing together,
“ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to
“ him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the
“ Lamb^d !” during the intermediate period be-
tween these two great events, there is upon earth
a mixture of evil and good ; there is, on that ac-
count, a mixture of sorrow and joy ; and the ser-
vice of the church consists of PRAYER and
PRAISE. We have sinned, we are afflicted, we
pray : Our sins are forgiven, we rejoice, we sing.

If we consult the page of history, we find,
that among all nations, where music has been at
all understood and practised, it has been applied
to this use, and employed in their religious festi-
vals. Whatever was the object of adoration, in
this manner was adoration paid. And as it is
notorious, that most of the rites to be found
among idolaters, were originally derived from
the primæval church of God, and transferred to
their false divinities, it is a fair supposition, that
what was practised by one, had been first practis-
ed by the other. Short as the account of things
and persons is in the Mosaic history of an infant

^c Job xxxviii. 7.^d Rev. v. 13.

world, we read very early of those who “hand-
 “led the harp and organ*.” It is impossible to
 say, at this time, what specific instruments are
 denoted by the Hebrew words; that they denote
 musical instruments of some sort, there is no
 doubt.

No sooner was there a regular national church
 established in Israel, a people selected by the
 Almighty for that very purpose, than we find
 music making a part of the ritual. “The
 “trumpet was blown in the new moon, on the
 “solemn feast day; such was the statute for
 “Israel the law of the God of Jacob.” The
 performers, vocal and instrumental, were ranged
 by the royal prophet, under divine direction,
 in their several classes, and appointed to wait
 in succession, through the year†. At the de-
 dication of the temple by king Solomon, they

* Gen. iv. 21. Jubal, said to have been “the father of such,”
 was indeed a descendant of Cain, and the seventh only from Adam
 in that line. But that even in that line, that idolatry had so early
 taken place of the worship of the true God, does not appear.

† 1 Chron. xxv.—In imitation of king David, the emperor
 Charlemagne, in the university of Paris, founded by him, and in
 other parts of his dominion, endowed schools for the study and
 practice of music. At church he always sung his part in the choral
 service, and he exhorted other princes to do the same. He was
 very desirous also that his daughters should attain a proficiency in
 singing, and to that end had masters to instruct them three hours
 every day. See Sir John Hawkins, vol. ii. p. 31.

were

were all assembled, and performed together, the whole nation joining in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving, while the glory of the Lord, a body of light above the brightness of the sun, descended from heaven, and filled the house of God!

If music in the Jewish church served to enliven devotion, and elevate the affections, why should it not be used, to produce the like effect, among Christians? Human nature is the same, and the power of music is the same: why should there not be the same application of one to the other, for the same beneficial end, under both dispensations? Vocal music ceased not with the law: why should we suppose that instrumental music was abrogated with it? Surely, the trumpet may still be blown upon our feast day: the fingers and players on instruments may still make their voices to be heard as one, in blessing and thanking the Lord God of Israel, the Redeemer of his people.

On that night ever to be had in remembrance by us, when it pleased God to bring his first begotten into the world, the angel preached a short sermon on the subject of the nativity, and communicated to the shepherds the glad tidings of the Gospel; “Unto you is born this day, in the
“city

“city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ,
“the Lord”—Immediately, heaven’s white
robed choristers appeared, and sung the anthem
of the season—“Glory to God in the highest,
“and on earth peace, good will towards men^a.”

On the evening before our Saviour’s passion,
when he celebrated the passover with his disci-
ples, they sang a hymn, or psalm together. St.
Paul exhorts his converts, more than once, to
cheer and animate each other, in their christian
course, by “psalms, and hymns, and spiritual
“songs, making melody in their hearts, as well
“as their voices, to the Lord^b.” And this was
the constant practice in the primitive church.
Instrumental music could have no place during
the times of persecution, when, for fear of their
enemies, the Christians were obliged to hold their
assemblies in secret chambers, in dens and caves
of the earth. Organs are said by some to have
been introduced into churches, about the middle
of the seventh; by others, not till the eleventh,
or twelfth century; since which time, this kind
of music has made a part in the christian service^c.

With us of the church of England, indeed,
it ceased for a short period, in the last century.

^a Luke ii. 13.

^b Ephes. v. 19. Coloss. iii. 16.

^c See *Bingham*, b. viii. ch. vii. sect. 14.

By

By the sectaries of that day, organs were holden in abomination ; and the fury of an enthusiastic zeal, which seems to have been DEAF, as well as BLIND, destroyed many capital instruments. It is observable, however, of Milton, though so warmly engaged against the church, that his taste got the better of his prejudices ; for in one of his smaller poems, he speaks of cathedral service—as it ought to be spoken of—and in a manner truly worthy of himself^k. It is much to the honour of the members of the kirk of Scotland that many of them have lately subscribed liberally towards the erection of an episcopal chapel, with an organ, at Edinburgh. The votaries of presbytery not only bear the sound of the organ, but, I believe, have adopted it in some of their own places of worship in England. O might

* But let my due feet never fail

To walk the studious cloysters pale,

And love the high embowed roof,

With antique pillars massy proof,

And storied windows richly dight,

Casting a dim religious light,

There let the pealing Organ blow,

To the full voiced choir below,

In service high, and anthems clear,

As may with sweetness, through mine ear,

Dissolve me into ecstasies,

And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

Il Penseroso.

T

all

all their other prejudices in our disfavour die away and vanish in like manner!

The objections, in short, of any account, urged against choral music, are pointed at the abuse which has been sometimes made of it, and to which, like other good things, it is at all times liable. Great care should therefore be taken to keep the style of it chaste and pure, suitable to holy places, and divine subjects. "Religious harmony (says Collier) must be moving, but noble withal; grave, solemn, and seraphic; fit for a martyr to play, and an angel to hear." The light movements of the theatre, with the effeminate and frittered music of modern Italy, should be excluded, and such composers as Tallis and Bird, Gibbons and King, Purcel and Blow, Croft and Clark, Wise and Weldon, Green and Handel, should be considered (and it is hoped they always will be considered) as our English classics in this sacred science¹. Nothing then

¹ The science of Music was ranked next to that of Theology by *Luther*, who is thought to have composed the notes now sung to the hundredth Psalm.—On the true style and composition of Music in general, and sacred Music in particular, see the excellent observations made by the Reverend and learned Mr. *Jones*, in his *Treatise on the art of Music*, dedicated to the Directors of the concerts of ancient Music; Introduction, and occasionally through the work. The manner in which he has illustrated one science by ideas borrowed from another, in the way of analogy, shews the hand of a master.

can be said against it, and every thing may be said for it.

That which is commonly affirmed of nature (whatever is meant by the word) may with truth and propriety be affirmed of the God of nature, that he “doth nothing in vain.” To the element of air he has given the power of producing sounds; to the ear the capacity of receiving them; and to the affections of the mind an aptness to be moved by them, when transmitted through the organs of the body. The philosophy of the thing is too deep and wonderful for us; we cannot attain unto it! But such is the fact; with that we are concerned, and that is enough for us to know. The end and design of so curious an apparatus are most evident. Sound was intended to be the vehicle of sentiment, and should be employed in the conveyance of such sentiments as may instruct, improve, purify, and exalt the mind; such as, when received and retained, may inspire resolutions, and produce actions, tending to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. How can this purpose be more effectually answered, than it is, when the most beautiful and sublime passages of holy writ, set to the finest music, are heard outwardly with our ears, and ingrafted inwardly in our hearts? What can we have—What can we desire more, upon earth?

The power of music is but too well known by fatal experience, when it is misapplied—applied to cherish and call forth the evil that lies concealed in the corrupt heart of fallen man; to recommend and excite in him all the follies of levity and dissipation, of intemperance and wantonness. What are we to do in this case? Are we to renounce and disclaim music? No; let us employ music against music. If the Philistines sing a chorus in honour of their idol, let Israelites sing one louder to the glory of Jehovah^m. In the heathen mythology we are told, that when the Sirens warbled their soft seducing strains, to allure heedless mortals into the paths of unlawful pleasure, two different methods were made use of, to escape the snare. Some rendered themselves incapable of hearing, while others overpowered their songs by chanting divine hymns. The story is fabulous, but the moral just, and apposite to the subject in hand. For there is no doubt but that the heart may be weaned from every thing base and mean, and elevated to every thing that is excellent and praise-worthy, by sacred music. The evil spirit may still be dispossessed, and the good spirit invited and obtained, by the harp of the Son of Jesse.

^m This is done in the Oratorio of Sampson.

Talk we of LIFE, and JOY, and PLEASURE?
 “Thou, O Lord, shalt shew us the path of
 “LIFE; in thy presence is the fulness of JOY,
 “and at thy right hand is PLEASURE for ever-
 “more.”

Are we at any time heavy and sluggish? Does religion seem dull, prayer a task, and thanksgiving a burden! “Awake up, my glory, “awake, lute, and harp! — I will praise thee, “O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto “thee among the nations. For thy mercy is “great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto “the clouds. Set up thyself, O God, above “the heavens, and thy glory above all the “earth.”

Have we a turn to ingratitude? Are we disposed to forget the mercies we have received? — “I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard “the voice of my prayer; that he hath inclined “his ear unto me; therefore will I call upon “him as long as I live.”

Is the strong man tempted to glory in his

ⁿ Ps. xvi. 11. Set full by *Goldwin*, and a charming duet by Dr. *Blake*.

^o Ps. lvii. 8, &c. Set by *Wife*.

^p Ps. cxvi. 1. Set by Dean *Aldrich*, from *Carissimi*.

strength, the great man in his power, the rich man in his possessions, or the fair woman in the beauty and gracefulness of her person?—“As
 “for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of
 “the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth
 “over it—it is gone—and the place thereof
 “shall know it no more^a.”

Are we captivated by any thing we see or hear below, and induced to esteem it GREAT?—
 “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I
 “heard a great voice of much people in heaven,
 “saying Hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and
 “honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.
 “For true and righteous are his judgments. And
 “again they said, Hallelujah. And the four and
 “twenty elders, and the four living creatures fell
 “down, and worshipped God that sat on the
 “throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah. And a
 “voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our
 “God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him
 “both small and great. And I heard as it were
 “the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice
 “of many waters, and as the voice of mighty
 “thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord

^a Pf. ciii. 15. Set by *Clark*.

“ God

“ God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad,
“ and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the
“ marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife
“ hath made herself ready’.”

Before such a scene, and such a band, every human performance must shrink, and fade away, in the comparison. A performance, however, has lately been exhibited, and to our honour, has been exhibited in Britain*—(it’s sound still vibrates in the ears of many who hear me) which furnished the best idea we shall ever obtain on earth of what is passing in heaven. It did justice (and that is saying very much indeed) to a composition of the great master, to which may be applied the observation of a learned writer upon a chorus in an anthem penned by the same hand, that “ nothing less is suggested
“ by it to the imagination, than all the powers
“ of the universe associated in the worship of
“ it’s Creator’.”

Music, then, has always been used in the church, and with good reason. May it always continue to be so used, and to produce it’s proper effects! In England, choral service was

* Rev. xix. 1, &c. Set by *Blow*, in a strain of sublimity truly wonderful.

* Commemoration of *Handel* in Westminster Abbey.

* Sir John *Hawkins*, v. 416.

first introduced in this Cathedral", and the practice of it long confined to the churches of Kent, from whence it became gradually diffused over the whole kingdom. Here may it breathe it's last—but not till time shall expire with the world. Violated no more by sacrilegious hands, may this august and magnificent fabric remain, in perfect beauty, through all the generations of mankind that are yet to come, a monument of the piety of our ancestors, and a witness to that of our posterity: May thanksgiving and the voice of melody, like that of this day, be evermore heard in it, till, the veil being done away which parts the visible from the invisible world, the choirs of heaven and earth shall unite before the throne.

^u Sir John *Hawkins*, i. 404, 371.—We are informed by *Strype*, in his *Annals of the Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 314, that when *Queen Elizabeth* was entertained at Canterbury by Archbishop *Parker*, the French ambassador, who was in her suite, hearing the excellent music in the cathedral church, extolled it to the sky, and brake out into these words. "O God, I think no prince beside in all Europe ever heard the like, no, not our holy father the Pope himself."—May we not say, that to cathedrals, and the persons teaching and taught in them, has been owing the preservation of music among us, from age to age?

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
SOCIETY OF GENTLEMEN,
EDUCATED IN THE
KING'S SCHOOL, CANTERBURY,
ON THURSDAY, AUG. 26, 1784.

S. I. R. M. O. N.

SOCIETY OF CHRISTIANS

LEUNG SCHOOL, CANTON

S E R M O N XII.

PROV. IV. 7.

*Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom:
and with all thy getting, get understanding.*

THE sage instructor of the world, from the eminence on which Providence had placed him, surveys mankind. Discontented with themselves, and their present condition, he beholds them engaged in the pursuit of something that still flies before them. Pleasure, wealth, and power, appear in their view, and solicit their attention. Grieved to see time mispent in quest of things perishable, and labour lost on that which either may not be obtained, or, when obtained, may disappoint in enjoyment all the hopes excited by expectation, he raises his voice, and wishes it to be heard to the ends of the earth. He calls men off from a fruitless chase after objects attained with difficulty, and possessed without satisfaction; he
points

points out one, adequate to all their efforts ; one, in the pursuit of which no time can be mispent, no labour can be lost ; one, which presents itself a fair mark, to be always hit by the quick eye, and the steady hand ; one that may be surely gained by genius and diligence, and when gained, is productive of pleasure, riches, and honour ; pleasure, which fadeth not away ; riches, which none can take from the happy possessor ; and the honour, which cometh from God only. Solomon found, if men were disposed to be contented with any thing, it was that with which they never should be contented — their ignorance. He exhorts them to LEARN. “ Wisdom is the principal thing : therefore, “ get wisdom ; and with all thy getting, get “ understanding.”

The subject will best be laid before you, in it's several branches, by considering, WHAT it is we are enjoined to acquire ; HOW we are to acquire it ; and WHY we are to acquire it.

First, then, we will consider the nature of that, which we are so earnestly enjoined to acquire.

It would be tedious, and it is needless, critically to discuss the signification, and nicely to trace the shades which discriminate the meaning
of

of the different words employed in the book of Proverbs; such as, "wisdom, understanding, "knowledge, prudence, discretion," and the rest. They seem often to be used promiscuously. So far, at least, as relates to our present purpose, and the institution which is the occasion of our assembling at this time, they may certainly be regarded as terms nearly synonymous, and intended to convey the idea now generally expressed by the word, **LEARNING**. The wisdom of Solomon, we know, extended itself on every side; it was conversant in matters physical and theological, natural and artificial: it investigated and stated the duties and offices of man, political, domestic, and personal: it contemplated him in the several relations and employments of life, and prescribed the conduct respectively proper in each. And this surely is true wisdom; this is the end of all learning. Philosophy, the result of sagacity, reading, and experience, lays down rules and maxims; history furnishes examples; and the system of nature, with the inventions and improvements of art, supplies images and illustrations.

A distinction has been made between divine and human learning, and much has been written upon it. The former has by some been magnified

nified to the contempt and exclusion of the latter, as if that ought not to be brought into the sanctuary; as if any great quantity of it were not only useless, but prejudicial; as if science were the death of goodness, and ignorance indeed the mother of devotion. On the other hand, there are, who pretty plainly intimate, that they think the name of learning due only to that which we style human; religion, in their opinion, being calculated to engage the attention of none but those, whose abilities qualify them not for scholars. In the first of these representations there is a want of judgment; in the second, of piety. The two species of learning differ; but they differ as the MEANS do from the END. Were there no divine learning, human learning would lose great part of it's value: limited to the present life, it must terminate on the confines of the grave. And had we no human learning, we should not be able to attain to that which is divine. The days of inspiration have been long since at an end. God has ceased to communicate immediately the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to any man. Modern pretensions to such communications betray some fault either in the hearts or heads of those who make them.

These

These treasures must be sought for, with the blessing of God upon our endeavours, in the ordinary way. All the divine learning upon earth is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, which are written in Hebrew and Greek. Those languages therefore, with the Latin, must be studied; and the study of them falls within the department of human learning.

Enough, perhaps it will be urged, may be gathered from translations, for all the purposes required. But to whom are we indebted for translations, unless to those who by good and sufficient learning became qualified for the work? And as they, however worthy and able, were yet very far from infallible, it will frequently happen, in points of difficulty, that we can neither sufficiently establish our own faith, nor confute the arguments of the adversary, without recurring to the originals. The adversary, to serve his turn, will recur to them: and what will become of us, if we are not able to follow him?

The history of the people of God cannot be understood, without taking with us that of pagan states, particularly of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. An exact acquaint-

acquaintance with what has been passing in the world, since the extinction of the last, cannot be dispensed with in a commentator on the prophecies, particularly those in the Revelation. To adjust the situation of places, and the succession of times, we must call to our assistance the sciences of geography, chronology, and astronomy. Nor can the proportions of the temple and it's furniture, described in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and afterward referred to by Ezekiel and St. John, be well comprehended and ascertained, without something of mathematics and mechanics. Thus necessary is a knowledge of languages and sciences to interpret the letter of Scripture, the source of doctrines and precepts, the foundation of all improvements moral and spiritual: and they must ever be the best interpreters, who have the largest share of it. The advantages of a superior skill in the Greek language, as exercised on passages in the New Testament, and the early ecclesiastical writers, has been eminently displayed in a controversy now subsisting, the subject of which is of the highest importance.

Less indeed of human learning was needed by the clergy, when the world around them
had

had none; as was the case in the dark ages preceding the Reformation. To the clergy, however, of those very ages are unbelievers indebted for the preservation of that learning, which, since the Reformation, they have employed in vain against Christianity. From the clergy in modern times have proceeded nine in ten of the books written to facilitate the progress of literature, and disseminate every species of it through the world^a. Enemies to false philosophy, they have ever proved themselves the friends and promoters of that which is true. Yet a certain author having very innocently mentioned “a philosophical divine,” as a character that might be supposed to exist, without any contradiction implied, the historian of the Roman empire is pleased to represent such a supposed being as a STRANGE CENTAUR^b, a composition absurd and monstrous, half man and half brute. According to his own ideas, however, the representation may be just enough; for a philosopher, as we have too much reason to apprehend, in his acceptance of the word, is an unbeliever; a divine is (and let us hope, will always continue to be) a believer. Wis-

^a See the late Dr. *Jortin's* admirable Charge, upon this subject, at the end of his Sermons.

^b Vol. ii. p. 369.

dom, it seems, was born with the infidel, and will die with him. We will take the liberty, notwithstanding, to say—because it is true—that whatever learning may at any time have been brought to the attack, there has never hitherto been found a deficiency of it for the defence of religion; neither will there be found any such deficiency, we trust, in time to come, while our schools and universities (chiefly under the management and direction of clergymen) shall continue to exist and flourish. From considering the nature of that wisdom we are in the text exhorted to acquire, this leads us to bestow some reflections,

Secondly, on the best method of acquiring it.

Learning is that which may be learned. As wisdom is not communicated by inspiration, so neither is it born with us. We come into the world without principles of any kind, because without ideas of any kind. This opinion was long controverted, as being thought to militate against religion. But the apprehension appears to have been groundless. The doctrine is established, and religion has received no detriment.

It is still, nevertheless, imagined, that a man may make wonderful discoveries by the exercise of

of his own powers. But the first step in the process has been sometimes unaccountably overlooked. It has been forgotten, that those powers must be elicited and formed by cultivation; that every man must be taught by some one how to use them, or that he will discover nothing. A truth, when it has been proposed and explained to us, appears clear and evident; all the truths contained in the propositions of Euclid appear so: but surely it follows not, that, without information, we should have discovered them, or have once thought concerning them. This is a fallacy, by which mankind of late have been greatly misled. No instance can be produced, from Adam to the present hour, of a single human being, brought up apart from all instructors, who ever spoke or reasoned. The state indeed is unnatural, and one into which man cannot fall, but by accident. In the common course of things, Providence has been pleased to ordain, that he should be born in society, and have those about him, who never fail to teach him as much as they themselves know; their language, and the notions current among them. These he learns; and if he be taught no more, he knows no more.

Our countrymen sent, in quest of a new

continent, to visit the extremities of the old ones, and the distant isles of the South Sea, have returned with accounts, which confirm what has been said, and may serve to convince us, that "man is born," as the Scripture expresses it, "like a wild ass's colt;" and, without education, will continue such: that he is born with capabilities only, and is in reality what he is made by instruction. These accounts should produce in us a sentiment of pity for our fellow creatures, whose condition is so truly deplorable; and one at the same time of gratitude to our heavenly Father, who has cast our lot in a fairer ground. Some modern philosophers seem to think the rocks of Patagonia, and the deserts of New Zealand, to be the only schools in which human nature can be studied to advantage. But surely we might as well expect a statuary to accomplish himself in his art, by looking all day at a block of marble, because out of that block a statue may be formed. Shall we judge of a plant, by contemplating the seed from which it is to spring? No: let us view the tree, it's root fixed in the earth, and drawing moisture from beneath; it's trunk fully grown, it's branches expanded, and

Job xi. 12.

drinking

drinking in the dew of heaven from above; the whole invested with it's foliage as a beautiful garment, and crowned with it's fruit in the season. Let us not frame our ideas of human nature by surveying an infant, or a savage. Shew us the man completely formed and perfected by a liberal, a learned, and a religious education.

From the mountains of Switzerland a voice has been heard, proclaiming, that we are all mistaken; that to teach (in matters of religion and morality) is to prejudice; and therefore, infuse, says this philosopher, no principles into the minds of youth; let them adopt their own, when they come to years of discretion.

But still, it is an indisputable fact, that men must learn: and they who do not learn betimes, will learn with far more difficulty, when advanced in years. The soil stiffens and hardens by continuing untilld. The ground must be broken up, and good seed must be sown, by him who expects to see vallies covered over with corn, at the time of harvest. Weeds and thistles only will be the spontaneous and unhappy produce. If children are not early conducted into the paths of truth and virtue, they will be found, at a maturer age, in those of

error and vice. We cannot, I am afraid, prevail upon the world, the flesh, and the devil, to stand neuter, during the experiment; an experiment which whoever shall make once, without pretending to the spirit of prophecy, we may venture to predict, will find no encouragement to make it again. The truth is, we must teach children the best we can, while they are young, leaving them to alter and correct afterwards, if they shall see occasion. The nature of the thing admits of no other method consistent with the dictates of reason and common sense.

Instruction being thus necessary, we are to consider through what hands it may be most advantageously conveyed. Through those, perhaps it will be said, of the parents. One should certainly imagine so at first sight. But then, all parents are not able to instruct, having not been themselves sufficiently instructed. Those of them who are able, may not be willing to submit to the task; while many, both able and willing, cannot find leisure from their necessary business, to undertake it. The fault of Mr. Locke's treatise is, that it supposes none of these cases to happen, but that a father shall always be at liberty to take care of his
son's

son's education. The same fault is chargeable on the plan of a very sensible and agreeable instructress of a neighbouring kingdom. With great force of genius, and goodness of heart, she describes two persons of noble birth as giving up the world, and retiring, for a course of years, from public life, that they might devote their time and fortune to the education of their children^d. Undoubtedly, the design is praise-worthy. They were excellently well employed. Would to God, that many of their rank were so employed, in every kingdom upon earth. But all cannot do it; the scheme can never become general.

There is, besides, another difficulty in the way. The partiality and fondness of the tutor, when that tutor is a father, may often do the pupil an injury, the effects of which will go with him through life. To prevent this, the Spartans, by a law of the state, took children, at a certain age, out of the hands of their parents, and placed them under other masters. The Hebrews had their schools of the prophets, the Greeks and Romans their academies and gymnasia; and since the revival of learning in these latter days, the western world has abounded

^d Theodore et Adele, par M. la Comtesse de Genlis.

with schools and universities; of which, without incurring the charge of self-adulation, we may truly say, none have exceeded those in our own country.

In a public education, the means and instruments necessary for the acquisition of learning are possessed in a more full and complete manner. The master can give his time and his thoughts wholly to the work. Constant and long experience confers a degree of skill not otherwise to be attained. A spirit of emulation is excited in the scholar, who goes on with more sprightliness and alacrity in the company of his school-fellows, forgetting those that are behind, and pressing forward to those who are before, with the determination of a Cæsar, that nothing is yet done, while any thing remains to be done. A regular succession of business at stated times inures him to live by rule, and forbids him to be idle; while the discipline by which it is enforced, renders him healthy and hardy in mind and body. By being put so soon to manage and bustle for himself, he is prepared for the world into which he must enter, and in which he must pass his days: the various tempers and dispositions of his numerous companions bring him acquainted with

with those of mankind, among whom he is to pass them: and he forms connections, which, by banishing selfishness, by exchanging offices of friendship, by mutual assistance and communication of studies, as well as in many other ways, contribute towards his passing them with pleasure and emolument. If all who are engaged in the superintendence of our public seminaries could only bestow equal attention on the learning and morals of those under their care, so that they might go forth (and such, you will all bear me witness, have lately gone forth from hence) good MEN as well as good SCHOLARS, the dispute between the patrons of public and private education would be, perhaps, in great measure, at an end.

Respecting the method of school instruction at present in use amongst us, it is one which has been long tried, and found successful; witness those great and shining characters, formed under it's auspices, which adorn our annals; nor have its adversaries yet been able to propose another, liable, upon the whole, to fewer objections.

The observations made by an excellent writer on the plan proposed by the great Milton are

too

too valuable not to be recited to you upon the present occasion.

“ The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was
“ to teach something more solid than the com-
“ mon literature of Schools, by reading those
“ authors that treat of physical subjects, such
“ as the Georgic and astronomical treatises of
“ the ancients. But the truth is, that the
“ knowledge of external nature, and of the
“ sciences which that knowledge requires or
“ includes, is not the great or the frequent
“ business of the human mind. Whether we
“ provide for action or conversation, whether
“ we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first
“ requisite is the religious and moral knowledge
“ of right and wrong: the next is an acquaint-
“ ance with the history of mankind, and with
“ those examples which may be said to embody
“ truth, and prove by events the reasonableness
“ of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues
“ of all times, and of all places; we are per-
“ petually moralists, but we are geometricians
“ only by chance. Our intercourse with intel-
“ lectual nature is necessary; our speculations
“ upon matter are voluntary and at leisure.
“ Physical knowledge is of such rare emergence,
“ that

“ that one man may know another half his life,
 “ without being able to estimate his skill in hy-
 “ drostatics, or astronomy ; but his moral and
 “ prudential character immediately appears.
 “ Those authors therefore are to be read at
 “ Schools, that supply most axioms of pru-
 “ dence, most principles of moral truth, and
 “ most materials for conversation : and these
 “ purposes are best answered by poets, orators,
 “ and historians*.”

Some have thought, that as we are now fur-
 nished with translations of the ancient classical
 authors, we may spare ourselves the trouble of
 learning their languages.—Were the question
 only concerning matters of fact, it might be
 deemed perhaps of little importance to consider
 by what means we come at the knowledge of
 them, so that we do but obtain the truth ;
 though, by the way, whether in particular in-
 stances we have obtained it, can often only be
 known (as was observed before in the case of
 the Scriptures) by consulting the originals. But
 there is much more in the matter. The writers
 of Greece and Rome are our masters in style
 and composition ; with relation to which, the
 spirit of every piece will evaporate in the trans-

* Dr. *Johnson* in his *Life of Milton*, p. 142.

fusion.

fusion. Next in value to knowledge, is the mode of communicating it with ease and propriety. They who have studied the best writers of antiquity with this view, will always themselves be the best writers in any other language. When these shall cease to be regarded as our models, elegant simplicity and manly energy will give place to a false glare of affectation and refinement: loose and licentious tenets will be tricked out in the meretricious garb of false eloquence. A vitiated taste in writing, like that which preceded the decline and downfall of the Roman empire, will precede our own. Tacitus and Seneca will be imitated, rather than Cæsar and Cicero: epithet, point, and antithesis, will prevail; and we shall prepare for slavery, by “babbling a dialect of France.”

Nothing could tend more to accelerate a catastrophe of this kind, than the adoption of that system of foppery and immorality recommended by a late noble author, enamoured, almost to distraction, of the language and manners of our neighbours upon the continent. Learning and religion would then no longer make a part in the education of our youth. One would be banished under the notion of pedantry, the other excluded by the name of superstition.

Travel

Travel and a knowledge of the world, it seems, may supply the place of both. To know the world, is doubtless expedient; in some circumstances, necessary. But a man should know many other things before he enters upon that study, or he will do well not to enter upon it at all. Let him lay in a stock, and that no moderate one, of useful learning, and sound principles, ere he set out upon his travels; or he will be little the better for having seen the world, though the world may be somewhat the merrier for having seen him. If he go out an ignoramus, he will come home a profligate, with the atheist ingrafted upon the blockhead. As to the business of the GRACES—before the gloss can be given, a substance must be prepared to receive it; and solid bodies take the brightest polish.

From what has been said, you will perhaps be induced to think, that in times like these, and in a matter of such importance, projects of innovation are dangerous things. We know what we are to lose: let us be well informed what we are to gain; lest we should be led to exchange an old system with some defects, for a new one with many more; defects which are of little consequence, for defects which are of very great

great consequence indeed to the general state of learning, and the constitution of our country. Reformation was the word, in the last century; and one was at length effected, which swept away schools and universities, with the government civil and ecclesiastical. The revenues allotted to the support of cathedrals, and these their appendages, were seized, with a view to AUGMENT THE SMALLER LIVINGS. But mark the event—When the estates were sold, the presbyterian ministers, who had taken possession of the livings, and expected the augmentation, were told, to their utter astonishment, that the money was wanted, TO SUPPORT PUBLIC CREDIT. It was wanted, and it was applied accordingly'.—All was then overwhelmed by a deluge of enthusiasm, and illiterate fanaticism. The deluge which now threatens us is one of another kind, but not a whit less formidable.

Thus much for the wisdom we are exhorted to acquire, and the method of acquiring it. A few words shall be said, and they shall be but few, in the

Third and last place, upon the advantages

' See *Warner's Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 580. *Collier*, ii. 848. *Nalson*, ii. 291.

attending such acquisition, to the individual himself, and to the community.

To the individual, wisdom is indeed, as Solomon properly styles it, "the principal thing." The seat of it's residence is in the noblest part of the human composition; and that noble part it renders still more noble. What else gives to man the superiority over brutes; to angels over man; and to the Omniscient over all his creatures? "The Lord is a God of knowledge," and wisdom was with him from eternity^b.

The pleasures of wisdom exceed all others, in kind, degree, and duration, far as heaven is higher than earth. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace^c." A studious disposition makes those who are blessed with it valuable, good, and happy. It enables them to find a paradise in solitude, and profitably, as well as agreeably, to fill up the intervals of business. It renders them little sensible to the allurements of external objects, to those trifles and improprieties which disgrace the man, and degrade the Christian. The ill instructed and unemployed are the persons whose imagination is

^c 1 Sam. ii. 3.

^b Prov. viii. 22. Wisdom ix. 9.

^c Prov. iii. 17.

always wandering and afloat. For want of solid nourishment, their curiosity and their appetites turn to objects either vain, or dangerous; and hence proceed all those inventions for squandering away thought and time, which generally end in a forgetfulness of God and ourselves. It is incredible what inconveniences are avoided by those, who can pass their vacant hours with books, and their own thoughts. “Happy” — says a prelate, in his day, the admiration and delight of mankind, I mean the all accomplished Archbishop of Cambray — “Happy they, who
 “are disgusted with violent pleasures, and know
 “how to be pleased with the sweets of an innocent life. Happy they who delight in instruction, and find a satisfaction in cultivating
 “their minds with knowledge. Into whatever
 “situation adverse fortune may throw them,
 “they always carry entertainment with them;
 “and the disquiet, which preys on others in the
 “midst of pleasures, is unknown to those who
 “can employ themselves in reading. Happy
 “they, who love to read¹.” Let it be added, that this happiness is one, which as the world does not give, so neither can the world take

¹ Telemachus, b. ii. See *Phillips* on the Study of Sacred Literature, p. 172.

away.

away. It will never leave us, but continue a fast and firm friend, when every other pleasure shall have forsaken us. Wisdom will comfort us in the day of sorrow, and support us in the hour of death. Like the holy ark accompanying the camp of Israel, she will go with us over Jordan, and conduct us to our inheritance in the land of promise. "Exalt her," says the wise man, in the words immediately following my text—"Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

To a community the advantages of wisdom are many and great. A nation glories not less in the learning, than in the valour, of her sons. Long and illustrious is the train of literary heroes, which Britain beholds with an honest and conscious pride, who from age to age have filled the most exalted stations in church and state, or presided in the different departments of science, or, from the shades of an honourable and lettered retirement, sent forth their writings for the entertainment and instruction of mankind.

My younger brethren, the hope of the rising generation, our future joy and crown, all these were men like yourselves, trained in the same
x
course

course of education. Think of their examples, and emulate their fame. The trophies of Miltiades, you know, would not suffer Themistocles to sleep. Hear the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus upon this subject, in a chapter read constantly at our universities, on the days appointed for a solemn commemoration of founders and benefactors. "Let us now praise
" famous men and our fathers that begat us.
" The Lord hath wrought great glory by them
" through his great power from the beginning.
" Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men
" renowned for their power, giving counsel by
" their understanding, and declaring prophe-
" cies: leaders of the people by their counsels,
" and by their knowlege of learning meet for
" the people; wise and eloquent in their in-
" structions. All these were honoured in their
" generations, and were the glory of their
" times. Their bodies are buried in peace, but
" their name liveth for evermore." While the
world shall last, and any regard be paid to that
which deserves regard, "the people will tell of
" their wisdom, and the congregation will shew
" forth their praise^m."

If therefore there be any virtue, if there be

^m Eccclus. xlv.

any praise, think on these things, meditate on them, give yourselves wholly to them. Time is on the wing. It flies, to return no more. Seize the moments as they pass, and employ them to the best advantage. Lose not the golden opportunity, the sweet hour of prime, the morning of youth, health, and strength. Conquer the difficulties at first setting out, and all will be pleasure ever after. Labour now, and comfortable will be your rest, when the season of labour shall be over. "For glorious is the fruit of labour, and the root of wisdom shall never fall away". Let the sanctity of your manners keep pace with the improvement of your minds. To your governors be respectful and obedient; to your companions, gentle and loving; to all, courteous and obliging. And that the divine blessing may be upon you in what you do, remember to begin and end your studies with prayer. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God". Let him ask THAT, as the son of David did, and all things else, judged proper for him, shall be added to it^r. Pray, therefore, that God would "give you wisdom that sitteth by his throne, and reject you not from among his children:

^r Wisdom iii. 15.^o James i. 5.^p 1 Kings iii. 11.

“ that he would send her out of his holy
“ heavens, and from the throne of his glory,
“ that being present, she may labour with you,
“ that you may know what is pleasing unto
“ him. For she knoweth and understandeth all
“ things, and she shall lead you soberly in your
“ doings, and preserve you by her power. So
“ shall your works be acceptable ” in the sight
of heaven and earth, bringing glory to God,
credit to your instructors, comfort to your
friends, honour to yourselves, and benefit to
your country.

1 Wisdom ix. 4, 10, &c.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. ALPHAGE, CANTERBURY,

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1785.

THE PÁLISH CHURCH OF

ST. ALPHAGE, CANTERBURY.

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1955.

S E R M O N XIII.

P S A L M XXXIV. 11.

*Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you
the fear of the Lord.*

IT is one mark of that wisdom by which the world is governed, that the assistance afforded is proportioned to the necessities of the times wherein such assistance is called for. When the darkness which covers a land becomes so thick as to make men despair of it's removal, light shall suddenly arise from an unexpected quarter; small, indeed, and scarce discernible, at first; but gently and gradually increasing, till the darkness vanishes, and the perfect day is formed. When corruption of one kind or other has in such a manner overspread the face of religion, that it's features are scarcely any longer to be distinguished, a reforming hand shall appear, to do away the soil

contracted in a course of ages, and restore the picture to it's original beauty.

If a preacher mentions *the iniquity of the age*, it is regarded by many as a sort of cant; as a necessary ingredient in the composition of a sermon; and we are asked, if we think nations have not been as bad formerly? Undoubtedly many have; for which reason, God destroyed them, and raised up others to supply their places. In the days of Noah, and in those of Lot, men were as wicked as they are now; they were more so; for a flood came upon them in one case, a storm of fire and brimstone in the other. And whenever we shall be altogether like them (which God forbid we ever should be) judgment, in some shape, will seize upon us. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from us, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof." Such is the rule of heaven's proceedings, and it altereth not. We are not yet overthrown, because our measure is not yet filled up; but if we continue daily employed in filling it, that measure must in time be full.

The matter is, however, of late "come home to our business and our bosoms." A lawless tribe of profligate, desperate, unfeeling
villains

villains have broken loose upon the public, to rob, to maim, and to murder; so that we can no longer travel with comfort upon the road, or sleep with security in our beds. Numbers of these wretches are from time to time apprehended, and crowded together in prisons; from whence some come forth again to make fresh ravages in society, tenfold more the children of hell (if possible) than they went in; while others furnish out mournful and horrible executions of twenty or thirty at a time, to the astonishment of the kingdoms around us, and our own shame and confusion of face. How happens it, say foreigners to our countrymen, when upon their travels abroad — how happens it, that under a constitution, of which you boast, as the glory of the world, monthly scenes are exhibited, which would shock the minds of Turks and Tartars? This is a question more easily asked, than answered. The fact, alas, is certain; and even the public prints begin to exclaim, that there is no police amongst us, no remedy for these disorders; and, in short, that all is over.

But let us not by any means despair. This would only make bad worse. If we once bring ourselves to fancy that no remedy can be found,

no

no remedy ever will be found; for none will ever be fought.

Dark as the prospect was, a ray of light has broken in upon it, and that from an unexpected quarter. An institution has been set on foot by a private * individual, to the excellency of which every man who loves his country must rejoice to bear his testimony. From small beginnings it has increased and diffused itself in a wonderful manner; and if it be generally taken up through the kingdom, especially in the metropolis, with the same zeal and judgment which have been shewn in the management of it among you, the sagacity of the wisest cannot foresee how much good may in the end be done by it, and how far it may go towards saving a great people from impending ruin. At the moment in which I am speaking, not less than one hundred thousand pupils are said to be in training under its care. There may soon be ten times that number; and if it finally succeed with half these, five hundred thousand honest men and virtuous women, duly mingled in the mass of the community, will make a great alteration. In the case of good as well as bad,

* Mr. Raikes of Gloucester.

“ a little

“ a little leaven (and this can hardly be called
“ a little) leaveneth the whole lump.”

* The institution intended, as you all well know, is that of SUNDAY SCHOOLS, which seems to address itself to the parties concerned, in the words of the text; “ Come, ye children, “ hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear “ of the Lord.”

The persons to be taught under this institution are *children*.

It is a great happiness that men, in their present state, are not immortal. An evil generation passes away; and therefore, if proper care be taken, it may be succeeded by a good one. Else were the case of the world lamentable indeed. With old offenders little can be done. Hard labour, spare diet, and, above all, *solitude*, might do something; and the experiment, it is greatly hoped, will be made. But, in general, if the husbandman has in vain dug about the trees in his garden, and taken every other step necessary for their improvement; his method must be, to train up younger and better plants, which may answer the end of their plantation, and bear fruit, when the others shall no longer be suffered to cumber the ground.

The

The children proposed to be instructed are those of the *poor*.

Of every community, as it has pleased God to ordain in the present constitution of things, the poor must always form a very considerable majority. The necessities of mankind could never else be supplied; for the rich will not labour, but they are constrained to pay those, who for their own, and the common good, can and will labour. In return for these services, the rich, if they were wise, should do every thing in their power to make and to keep the poor honest, virtuous, and religious; to instruct, or procure them to be instructed, in the knowledge and practice of their duty to God and man; more especially, to set them a proper example. This I say would be to act the part of wise men, as well as good men. For when the religious principle is once perished and gone in the Poor, human laws will lose their effect, and be set at nought.

I will mention a remarkable instance of this, well attested. A servant, who had made the improvement that might be expected from hearing the irreligious and blasphemous conversation continually passing at the table where it was his place to wait^b, took an opportunity to rob his

^b The table was that of the late Mr. Mallet. The fact is related by *Davies* in his *Life of Garrick*, vol. ii. p. 59.

master.

master. Being apprehended, and urged to give a reason for this infamous behaviour, "Sir," said he, "I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, nor punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery." "Well but," replied the master, "had you no fear of that death which the laws of your country inflict upon the crime?" "Sir," rejoined the servant, looking sternly at his master, "what is that to you, if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greatest terror; why should I fear the less?"

Behold the wisdom of propagating infidelity and atheism in a nation! As the middle and lower orders of mankind are always ready to imitate the behaviour of their betters, this is one woful specimen, among millions, of the manner in which the general corruption of faith and morals has descended, and infected the world. We must now therefore take up the matter at the other end, and try, if, by reforming the poor, we cannot shame the rich into better manners, and better principles. And for our encouragement, in opposition to the instance of a master perverting his servant, let us recollect that mentioned in the Scriptures of a female servant, who waited on the wife of Naaman, a general

neral officer of the Syrians, and converted her master to the belief and worship of the God of Israel^c. To the poor the Gospel was at first preached: to the poor let it still be preached: the rich must do as they please; but for the promotion of their interest temporal and eternal, they cannot do better, than to believe and practise it themselves, and to see that every body belonging to them does the same. God defend all masters from free-thinking servants!—and all servants from free-thinking masters!

The foregoing considerations have been of a more general nature. It is time now to note the peculiarities which distinguish the institution of SUNDAY SCHOOLS, and recommend them to particular notice and encouragement. These have already been set forth to great advantage, by a worthy clergyman in our neighbourhood^d. I have only to draw his arguments to a point, and state them in as concise a manner to you as I am able, adding withal what may have occurred to myself, in the way of confirmation, or illustration.

It is to be observed, then, First, that when the managers of all other charitable foundations

^c 2 Kings, v. 2.

^d The Rev. Mr. Moore of Boughton Blean, in his sermon on the subject, and the excellent and very useful Appendix subjoined to it.
have

have done their best, numbers of children must still be left in ignorance, being employed, from morning to evening, during six days of the week, and all little enough, to earn the bread they are to eat. Their case therefore is desperate, unless we contrive to give them on a Sunday that instruction which they can obtain on no other day.

II. By appropriating the charitable fund to the use of Sunday alone, numbers may be comprehended (perhaps all the poor children in a place) who stand in need of such assistance: whereas a very few only could be benefited, at the same expence, for the whole week.

III. Sunday being a day of rest from the labour of the hands, from worldly business of all sorts (for such it ought to be among Christians), we are the more at liberty to employ it in the opening of the understanding, and improvement of the heart, which is the proper employment of the day. And blessed are they who do so employ the hours which remain, after the attendance on public worship is over. One of the great lights of the law, in the last century, Lord chief justice Hale, went so far as to say, and has left it upon record, in his instructions to his children, that he never failed to experience the kindly influence of a well-spent Sunday on
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the business of the succeeding week. He supposed (and I know of no good reason to be given why we should suppose otherwise) that, by the devout exercises of such a Sunday, the mind and the temper were formed and prepared to encounter the fatigues and difficulties which might occur; as also, that the favour of Heaven was a natural consequence of having kept it's commandments. Give me leave therefore to take this opportunity of intreating you to consider, whether the face of things would not be very soon, and very much altered for the better among us, if each master of a family should resolve to institute a kind of SUNDAY SCHOOL (if I may so speak) in his own house, and dedicate the evening of the Lord's day to the instruction of his children and his servants in matters of religion. I am not pleading for a Jewish or a puritanical sabbath; for a sour face, or an ill temper*. But it seems reasonable, that one evening, at least, out of seven, should be given to this good and necessary work, and that Sunday evening should be fixed upon; for unless some time be fixed upon, the work will never be done at all. A man may

* On the design of the Christian sabbath, and the proper manner of observing it, see a very sensible letter in the Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine for the year 1785, p. 1020.

live fifty years, perhaps, without once recollecting, that it is his duty to take this care of the household over which it has pleased God to place him.

IV. By a SUNDAY SCHOOL a number of children are kept out of harm's way; they are collected together, and inured to early and regular habits of attendance on God's worship; they are instructed in what is right; they are enabled to employ well their leisure hours, when they grow up; and teach others after them to do the same. Let me say, that these are very great points gained indeed! For though the observation be trite, it is true, and cannot be too often repeated; that most of those unhappy wretches, who suffer for their crimes, when they come to confession, charge their destruction upon the manner in which in the days of their youth they mispent Sunday, while their neighbours were at church. And how can it be otherwise? What wonder that they should turn out bad, who constantly missed the opportunities (the only ones, it may be, which they had) of becoming good? The thing speaks itself. And in confirmation of what was said above respecting families, let it here be added, that more young people of either sex, servants especially,

cially, are ruined by being permitted to wander abroad, instead of being well employed at home on a Sunday evening, than on any other. The reason again is plain ; because on that evening, for want of the discipline in families above recommended, there is a far greater number of idle young people stirring, whose sole business it is to seduce and corrupt one another. Thus is the holiest of days, beyond any other, polluted and profaned !—“ If the light that is in thee “ be darkness, how great is that darkness !”

V. The children of the poor, by being drawn out of their obscurity into notice and protection, are humanized and civilized. They are equally surprised and pleased, on finding themselves thus regarded, and quickly become different creatures. Their pastor has an opportunity of visiting, addressing them according to their capacities, examining them, commending and rewarding the good and diligent, and reproving those that misbehave themselves. In these circumstances, he is always sure of being attended to with reverence and respect, and every thing he says will be minded. To form early in young minds a proper disposition towards their spiritual father and teacher, is a great acquisition, which must be productive of the best conse-

consequences, and would often prevent some of the worst evils with which we are troubled.

Lastly, let it be considered (for though the consideration be of a less noble kind, it is by no means to be omitted) that by the principles of honesty and industry, instilled into them, these children will be disposed, in future, to provide for themselves and their families, the number of paupers will be diminished, and that heavy burthen of poor's rates lightened, which now threatens to overwhelm and crush the nation.

It is hard to conceive a scheme which promises more benefits to the community. And wherever it has been tried, the expectation has been answered. Children have pressed to be admitted; when admitted, they have made due improvement; and, in some instances, have, ere long, commenced masters, and been found teaching other children at home, what themselves had learned at school.

At first, it was imagined, that what was learned only on one day of the week, must needs be forgotten before that day came again. The objection seemed plausible, but the event has shewn that it wanted solidity. Impressions made on one Sunday have been found to remain on the following Sunday. We are not in general

aware, how much may be done by a few hours in a week constantly employed on the same subject, especially where there is a willing mind.

Nor let us be discouraged, though our endeavours may not succeed equally with all. What endeavours ever did so? What gift of God has not been bestowed on some persons in vain? Rain falls on barren sandy deserts; but what would become of us, if none were therefore to fall on our fields and gardens? They must become deserts too. Nothing can be more trifling than this objection.

Another has been advanced in some of the public prints, though you will scarcely think it credible, namely, that they who teach the children are guilty of sabbath-breaking, because they work on that day for hire. Then the ministers of religion throughout the christian world are verily guilty of sabbath-breaking; since they are paid for teaching. Were they not so paid, and had they no other means of getting their bread, they must all be starved.

Such are the objections which have been hitherto produced against the institution of SUNDAY SCHOOLS. If no better can be produced, it must be said, that, for all which appears,

pears, they are worthy of universal encouragement. To encourage them is to forward the great design of the Gospel, in a case which seems to admit no other method of doing it. It is done with ease; for one person can instruct many children: and it is done at an expence which is a mere trifle, compared with the expences daily incurred in ways which afford no real comfort to the mind, on the recollection.

The institution solicits and implores, above all, the patronage and assistance of the clergy, under whose direction and superintendence, it should, if possible, be carried on. May we live to see the time, when the laudable example now before our eyes shall be followed in every parish throughout the kingdom! Grateful surely must it be to angels as well as men, to behold those children behaving with reverence and devotion in the house of God, who might otherwise have been committing acts of violence or fraud, without; to hear the praises of the world's Creator and Redeemer proceeding from mouths, which might have been pouring forth a torrent of blasphemy, or obscenity; to find a love of their duty and of their business implanted in hearts, where a love of idleness and of mischief might have taken up it's abode for ever.

ever. He who does not rejoice at the prospect of such a change as this, will have difficulty in discovering, why the tidings of a Saviour's birth were declared by the angel, who as at this season announced them, to be tidings of joy. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people" — from what? — "from their sins." To see children therefore wandering in darkness, ignorant of God and of Christ, reprobate to every good work, and every notion of good; and to continue idle spectators of such a scene, without making those exertions which it is in our power to make — this can never be right in any of us, clergy or laity; but must contribute much to the weight of that charge, which shall one day be brought against us. On the contrary, to succour those who are thus distressed for want of spiritual aid; to preserve little children in a state of innocence, or reclaim them from one of error and vice, by leading them in the ways of truth and holiness; these, says one, who has spent his life in the service of mankind, readily and zealously giving his countenance and his assistance to every scheme of piety and charity that in a long course of years has been set afoot among us, and to whom many of them owe their original

nal '—“ These are imperial works, and worthy
“ the immediate disciples of our Lord;” to
whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
three persons, and one God, be ascribed, as is
most due, all blessing, and honour, and glory,
and power, might, majesty, and dominion, now
and ever. Amen.

' Jonas Hanway, Esq.

and the Father and the Holy Spirit, the immediate objects of our love, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all blessing, and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and ever. Amen.

John Halsey, Rector.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT THE
PRIMARY VISITATION
OF THE MOST REVEREND
J O H N
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
IN THE
CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH,
ON SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1786.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE MOST REVEREND

J O H N

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

IN THE

CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITAN CHURCH

ON SATURDAY, JULY 1756

S E R M O N XIV.

J U D E, V E R S E 3.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

IT has been a doubt among expofitors, whether by the terms “common falvation,” and “the faith once delivered to the faints,” the Apoftle intended different things, or the fame thing differently expreffed. The latter feems moft probable. “The faith once delivered to the faints” feems neceffarily to involve in it “the common falvation.” But as this is a matter of no great confequence, it fhall not detain us from the confideration of that which certainly is fuch, the duty here fo evidently enjoined of “contending for the faith.” To take in the whole fubject, and difcufs it as fully as the time ufually allowed to
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an exercise of this kind will permit, it may be expedient to bestow some reflections on the OBJECT to be contended for; the NECESSITY of contending for it; and the MANNER in which the contention should be carried on.

I. The object to be contended for is “the faith once delivered.” A question is at present warmly agitated amongst us — What that faith is? A question somewhat extraordinary at this time of day; but certainly no trifling one; since either our opponents are guilty of degrading and dishonouring the Son of God and the Holy Spirit; or the Christian Church has been guilty of idolatry, from the very days of the apostles. This faith, as we say, is that system of truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures concerning the dispensations of the God whom we adore, and into whose name we were baptized; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three persons, in one God. These truths are proposed to us as the ground of our hope, our comfort, and our joy; as the principles on which the conduct of life is to be framed, accepted, and rewarded. We receive the Revelation which contains the truths, upon that plenary and satisfactory evidence vouchsafed us of its authenticity; and we receive the truths
which

which it contains, on the authority of the Revealer. There can be no better reason for receiving them, when that Revealer is God. Ignorance and malice have sometimes pronounced faith to be want of sense; but, surely, there is as little sense in withholding assent when it ought to be given, as in giving it when it ought to be withholden.

The different articles of our belief, dispersed in the Scriptures, were very early collected in summaries, styled Creeds, recited at baptism, and constituting thenceforth the badge and test of a man's profession*.

By a formulary of this kind, the catechumen himself was instructed; the faith, once delivered, transmitted down to posterity; the members of the spiritual society were kept together; the doctrines by them believed and taught, made known to the world, and distin-

* Nothing can be stronger for the doctrine of the Trinity, as one of its ablest advocates justly observes, than that the most ancient creeds should have been comprised (for so many learned men, upon good grounds, have conceived that they were comprised) in these few words: "I believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" since it is declaring the Sacred Three to be the One God; and no man who had been baptized according to this form, could be ignorant of the doctrine.—See *Waterland's Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, with the authors there referred to, p. 203.

guished

guished from a multitude of heterogeneous and erroneous opinions, by them disclaimed; a connection with the maintainers of which would justly have brought discredit on themselves and their cause.

For these reasons, the use of Creeds appears to have been at first introduced, and since continued. They who have at any time thought proper to depart from such as were established in the body to which they originally belonged, soon found it necessary to establish some of their own. The Arians, rejecting that agreed upon at Nice, drew up successively many others; I think, not fewer than seventeen, in the space of forty years. And remarkable are the words of Mosheim concerning the Socinians: " They dreaded the effects of intestine discord, which portended the ruin of their community, before it could arrive at any measure of stability or consistence. This apprehension was too well founded; for, as yet, they had agreed upon no regular system of principles, which might serve as a centre and bond of union. A summary of their religious doctrine was first published in the year 1574. Their system, afterwards changed and new modelled, required a new confession

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“ of faith, to make known its principles, and
 “ give a clear and full account of its present
 “ state. A new form was drawn up by Socinus
 “ himself, and styled the RACOVIAN CATE-
 “ CHISM, which is still considered as the CON-
 “ FESSIO OF FAITH of the whole sect^b.”

The true question therefore concerning Creeds seems to be, not whether any shall be imposed, but who shall be the imposers? Now, let us only suppose, that the direction of ecclesiastical matters in this kingdom should pass into the hands of those persons, who regard the doctrine of the Trinity as involving in it an absurdity equal to that of Transubstantiation, and as being the grand obstacle to the conversion of Jews, Mahometans, and Deists; who deem the worship of Christ to be gross idolatry, and high treason against the majesty of the one supreme God; must not the new unitarian church, with its confession and services, be so constituted, as utterly and for ever to exclude us from becoming members of it? Most undoubtedly, and of necessity, it must. “ An unitarian people (we
 “ are told) will not long be satisfied with a
 “ trinitarian establishment.” Indeed, I sup-

^b Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. cent. xvi. sect. iii. part. ii. chap. iv. § ix.

pose they will not; they will endeavour to overturn it: and it is our business to prevent them from so doing.

The reasoning that has been so often employed against the propriety of decisions by fallible men, seems itself to be a fallacy, confuted by common sense, matter of fact, and universal experience. A society of fallible men will always decide for themselves: they must do so; they must do the best they can. Another society of fallible men will decide differently. Individuals must likewise decide for themselves, to which society they will be united, or whether they will be united to either: and all must bear with one another. The nature of the case seems to admit of no other method.

In the mean time, the unitarians should consider, that we may be as firmly persuaded of the truth of our doctrines, as they can be of the truth of theirs. They should do us the justice to believe that we are so; that we do not see the absurdities imputed to us; nor, when we teach the doctrine of three PERSONS, intend to teach that of three GODS^c.

^c Crellius himself is candid enough to acknowledge, that the doctrine of three persons in one and the same individual essence does not constitute real and perfect tritheism; because of the close and inseparable union between them. See the passage cited in

Stillingfleet

Some, once our brethren in the faith, have forsaken it, and gone out from us. We lament — we must lament — their defection; but we cannot help it. They have sacrificed their preferment to that which we think to be their error. What they have done cannot prove error to be truth; it proves the sincerity of their persuasion; and, as in the course of the controversy, we apprehend, has been made to appear, the weakness of their judgment.

Should a minister of the unitarian church, at any future time, by reading the writings of English and French philosophers, be seduced first to doubt, and then to disbelieve the existence of the God, whose worship, as a minister, he is obliged to conduct; and, upon that ground, relinquish his establishment, though the principal means of supporting himself and a family—the case is possible—what must they say, from whose society he thus excommunicates himself? Not that the tenet is right, but that the man is wrong.

Loud were the calls for an alteration of our forms, some years ago, from men, and very learned men, of the Arian opinion, who never

Stillington on the Sufferings of Christ, part ii. near the end, vol. iii. page 407. of his works in folio.

once thought of denying the pre-existence of Christ, the miraculous conception, the plenary inspiration of the apostles, and of Christ himself (for even that is now denied), the immortality of the soul, or the spiritual nature of the Deity. Had an alteration then taken place, it must now have been succeeded by another; as the principal of our present opponents has devised quite a different system, and seems to entertain a more favourable opinion of us than of the Arians^d. But be this as it may. We shall be greatly blameable, if we part with our Creeds, till our adversaries are better agreed what shall be substituted in their room; and till we are assured, that the remedy proposed will not be much worse than the disease under which they imagine us to labour^e. Till that period

^d “ The Arians are even less entitled to the appellation of *unitarians* than the Athanasians, who also lay claim to it.” History of early Opinions, &c. i. 81. See the Preface, p. xv.

^e “ It is an easy matter for men of wit and fancy to find fault with any thing; but it requires thought and judgment to settle things upon their true bottom. Let those who are displeased with the received doctrine, shew us a better, and form any other consistent scheme (consistent with Scripture and with itself) if they can. Wise and good men will be always willing to reform, if there be cause for it; but they will not be forward to pull down what appears to be founded on a rock, in order only to build upon the sand. The Trinitarians have some satisfaction in observing, how long certain great wits have been employed in

“ new

shall arrive, there will be a necessity of "contending for the faith delivered" to us.

II. There is something very unpleasing in the Sound of the word CONTENTION, and volumes have been written on the offence occasioned by the thing itself. But, alas, it is one of those offences, which, I fear, "must needs come." Till the sons of Adam cease to be the sons of Adam, it cannot be prevented. So long, on one plea or another, the city will be attacked; and if attacked, it must be defended: the sentinel at his post cannot be blamed for giving the alarm, nor the garrison for appearing under arms. All that can be done in this con-

"new modelling Christianity; and have not yet been able to agree in any one certain scheme." Thus while, Dr. Priestley with so much earnestness and vehemence is pressing upon us the Socinian scheme, the author of *Ben. Mordecai's* Apology laughs at the idea of settling the Christian faith by rectifying "a Greek particle in Justin's Trypho, or ransacking antiquity for the opinions of the Nazarenes, Mineans and Ebionites;" calling upon us to attend to his doctrine of "a visible and inferior Jehovah." See the Preface to his second edition, p. v.—The woman mentioned in Prov. xiv. 1. is not mentioned as the wisest of women, who "plucked down her house with her own hands," to save others the trouble. Should we ever be persuaded to do like her, instead of the kingdom of God immediately appearing (which some seem to think would be the case) a very Babel would arise in consequence. If the experience of the last century cannot make us wise, most certain it is, that we shall never become so. When a man deceives me once, says the Italian proverb, it is HIS fault; when twice, it is MINE.

test, as well as others, is to provide, that it be conducted in an honourable way, according to the laws of war. "If it be possible," says an Apostle, "as far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men^f." Cases, it is therefore supposed, may happen, in which it will not be possible. It is not in our power to "live peaceably with all men," if some men will not live peaceably with us. We must not be the aggressors: we must not engage knowingly in a bad cause; nor persevere, if, in the process, we shall discover our cause to be a bad one.

Wonder has been often expressed, that Religion should ever have become the subject of contention. But the wonder would cease, if it were only considered, that things become the subjects of contention in proportion to their importance; and Religion being the most important thing in the world, they who are serious in their Religion will never suffer it to be taken from them, without contention. The fault is not in Religion, but in the different understandings, tempers, interests, passions, and prejudices of mankind. He who can rectify and adjust all these, will put an end to contention. Till this shall be effected, there will be heresies. The

^f Rom. xii. 18.

Apostle uses a stronger term ; “ there **MUST** be “ heresies : ” and, therefore, such as are able **MUST** combat them, and maintain the doctrines, to which they oppose themselves. The truths of God are not to be tamely given up. The injunction is, “ Contend.” The Apostles contended against the Jews, Pagans, and the Heresiarchs of their days. The fathers of the church contended against the same enemies, and others who arose in succession after them. The heroes of the Reformation contended against the Romish corruptors of the faith ; the bishops, clergy, and others of our own church, have contended against adversaries of various denominations : and if we expect that church to subsist, we must contend too.

It has been hinted to us, in some late publications, that if the trinitarian doctrines should continue to be obstinately maintained, the churches which maintain them, and the kingdoms in which such churches are supported, will, ere long, be destroyed, to make way for the pure unitarian Gospel. This is a very serious and alarming intimation indeed. For a zealous Antitrinitarian may fancy, that those idolatrous churches and kingdoms require to be quickened in their progress towards destruction ;

he may conceive himself in duty bound to become an instrument in executing the vengeance of Heaven upon them, for refusing to admit an Arian or Socinian reformation, tendered in a milder way. When "the faith," by us esteemed that "delivered to the saints," is represented as the "abomination which maketh desolate," surely it must be high time either to give it up at once, if it be such; or to contend for it, if it be not.

Our opponents are shrewd, active, busy, bustling, and indefatigable. They regard the toleration not as leave only to exercise their own religion, unmolested, but as a door opened to unlimited free enquiry; or, in other words, a full permission to attack the church in every possible way. They dare us to put in execution the laws which are still subsisting against the impugners of certain received articles of faith, enacted by those who were indubitably friends to toleration in general. They represent any human establishment, as such, to be a part of the Grand Apostacy; and wish to strip religion, that is, our religion, of the support and protection derived from its connection with the state. They inform us, that the nation abounds with Socinians, at present concealed, but ready,
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on a proper occasion, to declare: that a mine is laid under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may, and probably soon will, inflame, so as to produce an instantaneous explosion; in consequence of which, that edifice, the erection of which has been the work of ages, may be overturned in a moment, and so effectually, as that the same foundation can never be built upon again. Without any visible marks of decay, and before its bigotted friends suspect any danger, it may vanish, we are told, like a castle in romance ^b.

If this information be just, we are under no small obligation to the person by whom it has been communicated. It is fair, it is manly, it is noble, it is kind! and we must blame ourselves alone, if the caverns be not forthwith searched, and the combustibles removed. But what a man wishes, he easily believes; and

^b See Dr. *Priestley's* Importance of Free Enquiry, p. 39, 40. It is somewhat remarkable, that, in a sermon written and preached above four years ago, a friend of mine, aware of that "gun-powder," which Dr. Priestley and his friends (as he tells us) have been for some time employed in "laying, grain by grain, under the old building," spoke then of "a mine, waiting, perhaps, only till some unforeseen occurrence should kindle it, to destroy, at one tremendous explosion, the constitution in church and state."—These were his very words; as if he had been the bearer of the lanthorn, while the Doctor was at work.

great, as we all know, is the power of a lively imagination. We will therefore indulge a hope, that the above state of facts may not be quite exact ; however, in process of time it may possibly be realized, unless proper measures shall be taken on our side ; unless we “ contend.”

The necessity of contending for the faith being thus evident, we are to consider,

III. The manner in which that contention should be carried on.

When I say, **CONTENTD**, I do not mean, by pains and penalties. Such we may inflict upon our adversaries ; and, if they get into power (which, as they seem to think, will pretty soon be the case), they may inflict upon us. But by proceedings of this kind nothing is proved. The faith is apostolical ; the contention should be so likewise. The weapons of our warfare must be Scripture and history, reason and argument. By these the cause must be defended. By these it has hitherto been defended, and the invaders have left many strong forts behind them, untaken. We have seen nothing, as yet, which should induce us to depart from the doctrines of our Lord's Pre-existence, Divinity, and Satisfaction, and to adopt the interpretations of Scripture devised by the Socinians ;
which

which of all the interpretations, at any time offered to the world, seem to be the farthest from RATIONAL¹—a distinction to which persons of that persuasion have of late claimed a kind of exclusive right.

But though pains and penalties are out of the question, we are not to be remiss and lukewarm in the contest; we must “contend EARNESTLY.” The word used by St. Jude, *επαγωνίζομαι*, refers us to the severe struggles of the champions in the Grecian games. The same allusion, upon the same subject, is employed in the Epistle to the Philippians. “Stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving together, *συναθλόντες*, wrestling together, for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries^{*}.” Firmness and intrepidity become the warrior in the day of battle. An appearance of timidity and irresolution will give the enemy occasion to say, that we are not sincere; that we distrust the goodness of the cause in which we are engaged. The spectators of the

¹ “Cannot one know (says an excellent writer, thoroughly conversant in these subjects) that the Socinian interpretation of John i. 1. and Heb. i. 10. or of the texts relating to Christ’s pre-existence, is not the mind of Scripture? Yea, one may know it as certainly, as that a counter is not the king’s coin, or that a monster is not a man.”

^{*} Phil. i. 27.

combat will easily be led to think so, and fall off to the adverse party. Of two contrary opinions men may be at liberty to profess either; but both are not therefore true. In a matter of so much moment, neutrality must be criminal. “Why halt ye?” says the prophet. In other words — “Use your judgment; choose your side; and adhere to it, till you see good reason to the contrary.” It is easy to foretell the issue of a conflict, if all be activity on one part, and indolence on the other. Athanasius once stood single against the world, and prevailed. But the faithful have not yet so far ceased from among us. Numbers of great, good, and able men are left, sound in faith, and mighty in the Scriptures. A field worthy of their abilities and attainments is open before them, and there are many adversaries. Some opinions may be safely trusted with the public; they will die away of themselves. But others are of a nature so flattering to human pride, so congenial to the prejudices of an age long trained to despise mysteries, and propagated with so much industry, management, and confidence—that they ought to be withstood¹.

¹ They *have* been withstood, and *well* withstood. The thanks of the Church of England are due to Dr. Horsley, for his seasonable,

Tares will be sown, if the husbandman sleep; and he may be astonished, when he awakes, to behold the luxuriancy of their growth. No mischief will arise from discussion. Truth always has been, and always will be a gainer by it. It is a wholesome exercise for us. It excites attention, and prevents INDIFFERENCE, the enemy, of all others, most to be dreaded.

But while zeal is recommended, let not charity be forgotten. They are by no means incompatible. Who more zealous than the great Apostle of the Gentiles? And where can be found a brighter example of charity? Boldly confuting and reproving false doctrines, and corrupt practices; but ever ready to devote himself for the welfare of those, among whom they prevailed. After his own example he directs others to be *αληθευοντες εν αγαπη*, to “speak the “truth in love;” so to maintain truth, as not to violate charity. A golden precept, worthy to be engraven on the hearts of all who may be called forth to “contend for the faith;” that they may do honour to their cause by the arguments

able, learned, and judicious writings, in her defence. Let him occupy the department he is so thoroughly qualified to fill, and go on frustrating the attempts of our adversaries to deprive us of the argument from tradition.

^a Ephes. iv. 15.

proposed,

proposed, and no dishonour to themselves by the manner of proposing them. The weight of the reasons will not be at all diminished by the courteousness of the address: in it's effect it will be much increased. Mankind care not to be driven; they must be led into all truth. It was the method practised by the Apostles; it should be practised by their successors. Thus, and thus only, they are to "heap coals of fire" "on the heads" of their opponents. The dross will separate, and the metal flow pure. Logic should be used without acrimony; and wit, if it be used at all, tempered with good humour, so as not to exasperate the person who is the object of it; and then, we are sure, there is no mischief done. The disputant ought to be at once firm and calm; his head cool, and his heart warm. Thus a controversy sometimes begins; but thus, alas, it seldom ends; the irascible passions being generally excited, and full utterance given to them in its progress: allowance must therefore be made, on all sides, for the failings of humanity. That the *ODIUM THEOLOGICUM* exceeds every other, is said, perhaps, without sufficient reason. The vehemence of a contest will be in proportion to its supposed

^a Rom. xii. 20.

importance,

importance, the length of it's continuance, or the frequency of its repetition. When men are earnest, in short, they are apt sometimes to be violent. Our adversaries have taken to themselves and their opinions the epithet of LIBERAL, as well as that of RATIONAL. It may be, with equal reason. For why it is more liberal to deny, than it is to affirm, the doctrine of the Trinity, seems hard to say: and some pages might easily be filled with language concerning that doctrine, employed by the Polonian fraternity, which would make every ear in this audience to tingle*.

There is another property which one would most devoutly wish a controversy to possess, namely, brevity. A great book, in this way, is indeed a great evil, if the point can be settled in a small one. The superfluity of naughtiness should be cut off; all flourish and declamation, self-adulation and personal altercation, rhetorical amplification and digression, every sentence not immediately *ad rem*, as useless and noxious excrescences, pared away; that point discovered, on which the dispute turns, and the opponent closely confined to it[†]. Terms should be defined,

* Plenty of it may be seen in that useful work, Dr. Jonathan Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism.

† In doing this, no disputant, perhaps, ever excelled Mr. Leslie.

to prevent ambiguity and evasion; arguments and objections carefully collected, and methodically arranged; stated and answered with all possible conciseness and perspicuity; leaving as little room as may be for replies and rejoinders; the sad consequence of which is not only loss of time and temper to the writers, but disgust in the readers, who grow weary, and, despairing of being able to fix their opinions, resolve to give

Leslie. "The polemical skill of a Leslie," is an expression of Bolingbroke. A clergyman's library should not be without this author's theological works, in two volumes, folio, containing his pieces against Deists, Jews, Romanists, Socinians, and Quakers. He is said to have brought more persons from other persuasions, into the Church of England, than any man ever did; his skill in conversation being equal to that in writing. Allowance must be made for a style, which, though sufficiently perspicuous and nervous, is not according to the modern ideas of correctness and elegance. "Bayle styles him a man of great merit and learning. Mr. T. Salmon observes, that his works must transmit him to posterity, as a man thoroughly learned and truly pious. But a better and more disinterested judge, Mr. Harris, informs us, that he made several converts from Popery; and says, that, notwithstanding his mistaken opinions about government, and a few other matters, he deserves the highest praise for defending the Christian religion against Deists, Jews, and Quakers, and for admirably well supporting the doctrines of the Church of England against those of Rome." See Biographical Dictionary.—Mr. Leslie's writings have been neglected, because he had the misfortune to be a Nonjuror. But since the age is disposed to drop prejudices, it is a pity that this alone should be suffered to remain; especially as the subject of it is now "waxed old, and ready to vanish away."

them-

themselves no farther trouble about religion. For general utility, perhaps, the didactic form, with the objections duly noticed and obviated in their places, is preferable to the strictly polemical. The latter is often laid aside, with the dispute which occasioned it; but the former, if well executed, may continue to be read and referred to, as a staple and standard book of instruction on the subject of which it treats, from age to age.

The conduct of our opponents of different denominations impresses one lesson upon us with great force. It is this; however our studies may be employed, never to lose sight of the grand object, but to keep it constantly in view, and contrive by all means to forward it. It is marvellous to behold in what manner every department of literature has been occupied, and converted into a battery against the faith and the church. Half our danger does not arise from tracts professedly penned on the subject of religion, but from writings of other kinds, carrying nothing hostile in their appearance. The unsuspecting reader who sat down to inform or amuse himself with a piece of natural or civil history, biography, a poem, a tale, or a fable, if he have not his wits about him, finds his reverence

rence for the doctrines of Christianity, and those who teach them, filched from him; rises, to his great surprise, half an infidel; and is not sure whether he has a soul, a Saviour, or a God. As it has not yet appeared that the talents of believers are less various, or less excellent, than those of unbelievers, all these methods of diffusing error should be counteracted by the advocates for truth. The taste of the age should be attended to, and instruction administered through such vehicles as are most likely to make it palatable. Every man, in that way to which his genius directs him, should exert his abilities in the service of his Maker and Redeemer. He should early form a plan for this purpose, to be kept in view, during the course of his reading, whether stated or occasional. He will be pleased to find, when he does this, how every book he opens will lend it's assistance, and furnish some hint that may be improved, for the promotion of his design^a. An observation may be here added,

^a In this particular, among others, one of our old divines used to say, he found the good effect of a custom he had long practised, which was, on a Sunday evening, to put a fresh Sermon on the stocks, for the Sunday ensuing. Something always occurred, that was of use, in the reading of the week; during which, he never failed to ask himself, as he went on, To what purpose can I apply this, in the way of my profession?—An excellent rule. See that improving little book, the Life of Dr. Hammond, by Bishop Fell.

that

that as in political, so in religious contests, execution is done among the people, not by bulky treatises, but small pamphlets, written down to the apprehensions of the vulgar, diligently circulated, and sold at a low price*.

My brethren of the clergy will, I am sure, consider, with me, and lay these things to heart. We engage, at ordination, not only “by the
“ Scriptures to teach and exhort with wholesome
“ doctrine;” but likewise to “withstand and con-
“ vince gainsayers; to be ready with all faithful
“ diligence to banish and drive away all errone-
“ ous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s
“ word; and both privately and openly to call
“ upon and encourage others to do the same.”
The faith is a precious deposit committed to our charge. No care, no pains can be too great, to preserve it to our people, and deliver it down to our successors in the ministry, pure and unadulterated. Neither violence nor fraud should be suffered to rob us of the inestimable treasure. God and his church expect and require, that we

* An excellent little tract was printed for Rivington, in 1774. I wish 20,000 of them were dispersed through the kingdom, at this time. It was intitled, A Preservative against the Publications dispersed by modern Socinians; in which the impiety and absurdity of their principles are clearly shewn; addressed by a country clergyman to his parishioners.

* Ordination Office.

fulfil honourably this engagement, so solemnly formed in the presence of both. Whenever our faith is assaulted, to us the world naturally looks up for its defence; and it is well, if a failure in this part of our duty be not, one day, urged against us, as an argument for the abolition of an useless order of men. It is the property of our great adversary, first to TEMPT, and then to ACCUSE.

The propagation and support of true religion constitute, indeed, our peculiar task, the prescribed employment of our time, the proper exercise of our powers and faculties; for want of which, they will be either turned to other pursuits, quite foreign from our profession, or dissipated in frivolous amusements, or permitted to rust in sloth and indolence¹. Study of the Scriptures and Ecclesiastical History must ever be regarded as the first duty of a clergyman, because that alone can prepare and qualify him for a discharge of all the rest. It is a duty which, if cordially taken in hand, and vigorously prosecuted, will soon become his pleasure. And when a man's duty becomes his pleasure, he is

¹ When a friend told Bishop Cumberland, he would wear himself out by his incessant application; "It is better," replied the Bishop, "to *wear* out, than to *rust* out."

a happy

a happy man. Till then, he never can be one; being indebted, for his peace of mind, if he ever enjoy any, only to the want of consideration and reflection. But what is there which can so enlarge, improve, and delight the human mind, as a contemplation of the truths and dispensations of the Almighty? Where is the pleasure that can stand the comparison for a moment? I know of none that is not as much inferior, as earth is to heaven.

The Church of England, from the time of the Reformation, has gloried in a learned clergy, who stood prepared to repel, with skill and vigour, the assaults of her various adversaries. Some would persuade us, that this glory is departing from her. "The number of learned Socinians, it is said, is increasing; that of learned Trinitarians, decreasing."

The remark cannot but excite some wonder, when coming from one so evidently overmatched, as he appears to have been, in point of learning, by his very respectable antagonist. It affords, however, an useful hint to us, not to grow slack and remiss in our professional studies; not to think of subsisting on the same acquired by

^u Importance of Free Enquiry, p. 51.

our predecessors, but, diligently availing ourselves of their labours, still farther to advance and set forward the truth by our own. A general diffusion of knowledge in these latter days has enabled the lower orders of mankind to become acquainted with the objections urged against doctrines laid down by our church as essential and fundamental. Her ministers, therefore, will be frequently called upon for answers to those objections ; which, without having read and thought well upon the subject, they may be at a loss to furnish. Advantage will be made of this circumstance ; their people will be seduced, and the enemy will exult. A very small portion of time, applied regularly and constantly to any one pursuit, will soon effect things almost incredible. It is recorded of the great Usher, that wishing to know, at first hand, the sentiments of antiquity on the points in dispute between the Romanists and ourselves, he went through, between the age of 20 and 38, the voluminous writings of the Fathers, by devoting, amidst his other labours, a small proportion of time every day to that purpose. Tasks of this extent and difficulty need not be now imposed on a clergyman. The evidence on most controverted doctrines has been collected

collected and arranged for him ; and by means of a few well chosen books ^v, perused with due attention, he may become a sufficient master of the subject, and of the arguments which have been, or indeed can be, produced ; for there is but little fresh matter at this time to be started. What progress might he make, within the compass of a year, at the rate of a couple of hours only in each day !

By such an employment of his hours, he will be prepared, whenever summoned, to render a good account of them. Conscious that he must render an account, and cannot render a good one, it is impossible for him, if he reflect at all, to continue long at ease. The grand question concerning our conduct is, how it will ap-

^v Such as—Bishop *Bull's* Latin Works ; *Waterland's* Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity ; his Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures ; Dr. *Ridley's* at the same Lecture, on the Holy Spirit ; the writings of Dr. *Randolph* ; Mr. *Jones's* Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity ; Full Answer to the Essay on Spirit ; Letter to the Common People ; to a Young Gentleman at Oxford ; Remarks on the Confessional.

On Socinianism ; *Grotius* de Satisfactione ; *Stillingsfleet's* Discourse on the true Reason of Christ's Sufferings, against *Crellius* ; Bishop *Conybear's* Sermon on the Satisfaction ; *Edwards's* Preservative ; *Leslie's* Dialogues on Socinianism ; with *Mosheim's* Account of it's rise and progress, in his Ecclesiastical History.

For the Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, Dr. *Allix's* book with that title ; a most learned, valuable, and decisive work, on that part of the subject.

pear at the great scrutiny; and he alone is truly wise, who spends his time as, at the last hour, he will wish to have spent it. Happy the man, who may be able with all humility to say, when that hour shall come—"The time which thou
"hast given me has been passed in thy service.
"I have not suffered myself, through indolence,
"or dissipation, to live in ignorance of thy
"truth, or to withhold it from others. I have
"laboured diligently and faithfully to find it;
"and, when found, to publish and defend it.
"It is not my fault, if the people perish for
"lack of knowlege. I have done my best: I
"have fought a good fight: I have kept the
"faith; and endeavoured that others should do
"the same." This is a state of satisfaction and comfort for a minister of Christ, weighed against which, the world, with all it's wealth, all it's pleasures, and all it's honours, is "dust upon
"the balance, without weight, and without
"regard."

But besides the testimony borne him by his conscience within, other witnesses will appear in his favour from without. He will have the approbation and thanks of all those who wish well to the church and to their country; who do not apprehend, that the latter will be benefited

fited by the destruction of the former, or a nation saved by apostasy from it's Saviour. He will have the attestation of multitudes, that by his ministry, by his discourses, by his writings, they were preserved or reclaimed from error and from death, and conducted in the way of truth and life. " Behold him, and the children which
" God hath given him, like the arrows in the
" hand of the mighty : happy is the man that
" hath his quiver full of them ; he shall not
" be ashamed when he speaketh with his enemies, at the seat of judgment *."

On that seat he will view the blessed Person, for whose faith he has contended ; whose cause he has maintained ; the honour of whose name he has asserted and vindicated ; who has been a spectator of the conflict, and will award the crown.

* Isai. viii. 18. Heb. ii. 15. Ps. cxxvii. 4, 5.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH
OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY,

ON TRINITY SUNDAY, 1786.

S. F. R. M. O. N.

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITAN CHURCH
OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY.

ON TRINITY SUNDAY, 1880.

S E R M O N XV.

M A T T. XXVIII. 19.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

SUCH is the solemn form of baptism, prescribed by our blessed Lord himself, as a perpetual standing law to his church. Having redeemed mankind, and thereby acquired a new and special claim to their homage and service, he entered upon, and took possession of his purchased inheritance. And for what end? Plainly, that he might bring all nations, thus made his own by right of redemption, to the knowlege and worship of the true God. And how is this done? Why, by making them acquainted, in the very first instance, with the obligations conferred upon them by three ever blessed persons, called by the names of Father, Son,

Son, and Holy Ghost. These three persons, therefore, thus related and thus named, constitute that one true God, into whose name, faith, and profession, people of all the nations of the earth, and among them, we who are here assembled, have been baptized. In this consisted the sum of Christianity: on this foundation were the apostles to erect a church throughout all the world. Here, if any where, a right understanding, upon so important a point, as the nature of God, and the manner of his existence, would be highly necessary; nor could any one mistake more dangerously and fundamentally, than in such an article as this. — Let us then consider, if you please, how much is implied in the form of baptism thus prescribed by our Lord to the universal church, and by that church retained, and observed, from its first foundation to the present hour; how this is confirmed by the declarations of Scripture at large; and the interest we have in the doctrine that shall be thus established.

I. Now by the being baptized in the name of God, can be meant no less than entering into covenant with a person, as God; professing faith in him as such; enlisting one's self into his service; and vowing all obedience and submission

mission to him. Such is the natural, the obvious import of this rite, by which we are admitted into the church of Christ, this solemn form of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; that is, into the faith, service, and worship, of the Holy Trinity.

For let us reflect a little——

The nations were to be baptized in the name of three persons, in the *same manner*, and therefore, surely, in the *same sense*, as in the name of one. Whatever honour, reverence, or regard, is paid to the Father in this solemn rite, the same we cannot but suppose paid to all three. Is he acknowledged as the object of worship? So are the other two persons likewise. Is he God and Lord over us? So are they. Are we his subjects, servants, and soldiers, enrolled under him? So are we equally under all. Are we hereby regenerated and made the temple of the Father? So are we likewise of the Son and Holy Ghost. “We will come,” says our Lord, “and make our abode with him.” The outward act respects all the three; the inward meaning and signification must do the same.

^a Johⁱ xiv. 23.

We may consider likewise, that in the very names of Father and Son, a near relation, alliance, and unity, between two of the persons, is intimated; and in reason, we must infer something of a similar kind for the third, so closely joined with them. It is not said, “in the name of God and his two faithful servants;” nor “of God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost;” which might have suggested a thought, that one only of the three was God; but, “in the name of the Father and of the Son,” a style perfectly equal and familiar, without any note of distinction more than that of a personal relation, carrying with it the idea of a sameness of nature; as, among men, every Father and Son are of the same human nature with each other. From the very wording of the form of baptism, therefore, most reasonably might it be presumed, that the two first persons named were equally divine: and the inference from thence would fairly, and indeed unavoidably, reach to the third, to make all suitable and consistent; besides that the terms Holy, and Spirit, evidently point the same way.

But it is yet farther to be considered by us—and a consideration it is of very great weight indeed upon the subject—that a new religion
was

was to be introduced with this solemn form of words. And among whom was it to be introduced? Among Gentiles, or Heathen nations. These were to be taught to turn from their vanities to the living God; to renounce their idols and false gods, and so to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Now, what must occur to THEM, upon this occasion, but that, instead of all their deities, to whom they had before bowed down, they were in future to serve, worship, and adore, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the only true and living God? From the pompous and solemn proclamation of these three persons in opposition to all other gods, what could THEY conclude, but that these Three possessed in reality that Divinity which was falsely presumed with respect to the gods of the nations; that they had a natural right to all that homage and service, which men should pay to a Divine Being? We may add, that the circumstance of the form running in the NAME — not NAMES, but in the singular number, NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, might and did in the strongest manner intimate, that the authority of all the Three was the same,

same, their power equal, their persons undivided, and their glory one.

The last consideration under this head shall be, that nothing can appear more unreasonable, or unnatural, than to suppose that God and two CREATURES are here joined together in so solemn a rite of admission into a new religion, into the service of the living God, in direct opposition to all CREATURE-WORSHIP. For no rational account can be given, why the Son and Holy Ghost should be thus closely and equally joined with the Father, in an act so public, and of so high importance to the salvation of all men, unless it be, that all men are required to believe in, to worship, and to serve THEM also, as well as the Father: neither can it be reasonably imagined, that they are recommended to us in any such capacity, as persons to be believed in, served, and adored, if they be CREATURES only; much less, if Christ be no more than a mere man, like one of us; and the Holy Spirit a property, or quality only, of the Father—in short, if the three, taken together, be any other than THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD.

Thus far we have been arguing on the words of the text, and the doctrine implied in them, without taking in what the Scripture has revealed

at

at large concerning the Divinity of the three persons, which was, in the

II^d Place, proposed to be done.

Concerning the Divinity of the Father there is no dispute. Respecting that of the Son, you shall judge for yourselves, when I have laid before you what the Scriptures teach relative to his titles, his attributes, and the actions ascribed to him.

The divine titles given to the Son in Holy Scripture are as follow. He is called "the Word that was in the beginning with God, "and WAS GOD;" that "was made flesh," and whose "glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father^b." When it is said, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son," it is said also, "they shall call his name Immanuel, "that is, GOD WITH US^c." He is the LORD, before whose face John the Baptist was sent^d; the LORD GOD foretold by Isaiah, who was to "feed his flock like a shepherd^e." Of Jesus Christ it is affirmed by St. John, "This is THE TRUE GOD, and eternal life^f." St. Paul mentions "the appearance of the GREAT GOD and

^b John i. 14.

^c Matt. i. 23.

^d Luke i. 76.

^e Isai. xl. 10, 11.

^f 1 John v. 20.

“our Saviour,” or, “our GREAT GOD and Saviour, Jesus Christ^s,” for it is he who shall *appear* to judge the world. Isaiah styles him, “Wonderful, Counsellor, the MIGHTY GOD^h,” St. Paul again, “GOD over all, blessed for ever—moreⁱ.” In the Old Testament, Christ is frequently called JEHOVAH^k, a name which can belong to no one but God. In the Revelation he is introduced as saying of himself, “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, “faith the Lord, which is, and which was, and “which is to come, the Almighty^l.” By St. Paul he is styled “The Lord of Glory;” and by St. John, “King of Kings, and Lord of “Lords.” And thus much for his titles.

As to his attributes, he is declared to be eternal, “without beginning of days, or end of life^m,” unchangeable, remaining the same, when the

^s Tit. ii. 13. ⁱ Pet. i. 7.

^h Isai. ix. 6.

ⁱ Rom. ix. 5.

^k Jer. xxiii. 6. Zech. xii. 10.

cited John xix. 34. Rev. i. 7. Isai. xl. 10.

^l Rev. i. 11. “I cannot forbear recording it (says Dr. Doddridge) that this text has done more than any other in the Bible “towards preventing me from giving into that scheme, which “would make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature.” A denial of the PRE-EXISTENCE must have seemed strange doctrine to HIM. Dr. Kippis, who was his pupil, when he comes to Dr. Doddridge’s life, in the Biographia, will tell us, perhaps, what he thought of it.

^m Heb. vii. 3.

heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be changed, and pass away; “Jesús Christ, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever”; “knowing all things”, knowing what is in man”, “searching the hearts and reins”; present every where in the midst of his people wherever assembled, to hear the prayers put up at the same time from the different quarters and ends of the earth; which cannot be the case of saints or angels.

Of the actions ascribed to Christ, it may suffice to name four only. According to the Scriptures, he created the world by his power; he governs it by his providence; how else can he superintend the concerns of his church? He redeemed it by his mercy; and he will judge it, at the last day. Surely no Being, less than Divine, can be equal to works like these. When he shall appear on his throne, as the Judge of all the earth, who is the man that will refuse to worship him?

^a Heb. xiii. 8.

[•] John xvi. 30. xxi. 17.

^p John ii. 25.

^q Rev. ii. 23.

^r Matt. xxviii. 20.

^s John i. 3. Heb. i. 10.

^t I do not see my Saviour only in “a few detached passages” of either Testament. I see him conducting the economy of the divine dispensations, through both, from the creation to the consummation of all things, as the *דבר ידוה* the *מלאך ידוה* and *Ο λογος τω Θεω*. Dr. Allix and Mr. Taylor have both demonstrated

The Holy Spirit is described in Scripture as the immediate author and worker of miracles; the inspirer of the prophets and apostles; the searcher of all hearts, and the comforter of good christians in difficulties. To lie to him is the same thing as to lie to God. Blasphemy against him is unpardonable. To resist him is the same thing as to resist God. He is in God, and knows the mind of God as perfectly as a man knows his own mind; and that in respect of all things, even the deep things of God. The bodies of men are his temple, and by being his temple, are the temple of God. He is joined with God the Father, not only in the solemn form of baptism, as we have seen above, but in religious oaths, and invocations for grace and peace; in the same authoritative mission and vocation of persons into the ministry; "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul." Must he not then be a PERSON? In a word, he is LORD, or JEHOVAH, and GOD, and LORD OF HOSTS*.

To these testimonies for the Divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit I shall add only one observation. It is only to be wished, the latter had drawn the conclusion drawn by the former—the just and proper conclusion—that the person spoken of must indeed be VERY GOD.

* Acts xiii. 2.

† See the Conclusion of Mr. Jones's Catholic Doctrine, &c. See also Dr. Ridley.

vation

vation more, namely, that in a great number of instances, the very same things are said, in different places of Scripture, of all the three divine persons; and the very same actions ascribed to them*. The whole Trinity is said to be eternal, holy, true, living, and every where present; to have made man; to instruct and illuminate him; to lead us, to speak to us, and to be with us; to give authority to the church; to sanctify the elect; to perform every divine and spiritual operation; and to raise the dead. Therefore, these three were, are, and will be, one God, from everlasting to everlasting†.

Having now considered the doctrine of the Trinity as implied in the words of the text, and confirmed by the declarations of the Scriptures at large, I am to shew, in the

* See the Conclusion of Mr. Jones's Catholic Doctrine, &c.

† Such being the fact, all disputation concerning the *manner* of the Distinction, the *manner* of the Union, the *manner* of the Generation, and the *manner* of the Procession, is needless, and fruitless: needless, because if we have divine authority for the fact, it sufficeth; *that* is all we are concerned to know; fruitless, because it is a disputation without ideas: after a long, tedious, intricate, and perplexed controversy, we find ourselves—just where we were—totally in the dark. Such has been the case respecting this and other questions. God is pleased to reveal the fact; man insists upon apprehending the mode; in his present state he cannot apprehend it; he therefore denies the fact, and commences unbeliever.

to III^d and last place, the interest we all have in the doctrine thus established: or, in other words, we have endeavoured to shew what the three divine persons are in themselves, and what relation they bear to each other: let us now enquire what they are, and what relation they bear, to us, and what are the duties on our side, resulting from that relation; the benefits conferred by them, and the return, in love, honour, and gratitude, due from us.

Many apprehend the doctrine of the Trinity to be what is called a SPECULATIVE doctrine only, that is to say, a doctrine, concerning which men may think, and conjecture, and reason, and dispute, for their amusement, but of no effect or importance in a religious life. This is a considerable mistake in judgment; and to prove that it is so, let us only ask one question: What is the doctrine of most importance to man, in his religious concerns? Undoubtedly it is that of his Redemption from sin and sorrow, from death and hell, to righteousness and joy, immortality and glory. But of such redemption what account do the Scriptures give us? By whom was the gracious scheme originally concerted, and afterwards carried into execution? Was it not by the three persons of the ever blessed and adorable Trinity?

It

It was not an afterthought, a new design, formed upon the transgression and fall of our first parents. That event was foreseen, and provision made accordingly. For upon the very best authority we are informed, that Christ was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world^z ;” that is (for it cannot be otherwise understood) slain in effect, in the divine purpose, and counsel. It is likewise said, that “grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began^a.” The words intimate, that, previous to the creation of the world, something had passed in our favour above; that the plan of our future redemption was then laid; that some agreement, some covenant, relative to it, had been entered into; “grace was given us” not in our proper persons, for as yet we were not—we had no being—but in the person of him who was afterward to become our representative, our Saviour—“in Christ Jesus.” Now the plan must have been laid, the covenant entered into, by the parties who have since been graciously pleased to concern themselves in it’s execution. Who these are we cannot be ignorant. It was the Son of God who took our nature upon him, and in that nature made a full and sufficient ob-

^z Rev. xiii. 8.^a 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2.

lation, satisfaction, and atonement, for the sins of the world. It was the Father who accepted such oblation, satisfaction, and atonement; and in consequence forgave those sins. It was the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son, through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments, by his enlightening, healing, and comforting grace, to apply to the hearts of men, for all the purposes of pardon, sanctification and salvation, the merits and benefits of that oblation, satisfaction, and atonement.

Say no more, then, that the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of curiosity and amusement only. Our religion is founded upon it. For what is Christianity, but a manifestation of the three divine persons, as engaged in the great work of man's Redemption, begun, continued, and to be ended by them, in their several relations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, three Persons, one God? If there be no Son of God, where is our Redemption? If there be no Holy Spirit, where is our Sanctification? Without both, where is our Salvation? And if these two persons be any thing less than divine, why are we baptized, equally, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and
of

of the Holy Ghost? Let no man therefore deceive you: "This is the TRUE God, and eternal life^b."

And while you suffer no man to deceive you, do not, I beseech you, deceive yourselves. Benefits conferred require duties to be paid. Remember what the three divine persons have done for you, and forget not what they expect that you should do in return. For how little will it avail you to believe aright concerning the Trinity, if you live so as to displease the Trinity?—You know and believe in the true God: you do well. But let not that which is an honour to you, be any encouragement to dishonour God; the knowledge of whom can only serve to increase your condemnation, if you live in the practice of pride and malice, envy and hatred, lust and intemperance, even as the heathen who knew him not. And though it be the faith of a christian which distinguishes him from the rest of mankind; yet that faith, to profit him, must appear in the conduct of his life; as love to a friend is best witnessed by a readiness to do him service. It is true, the service is not the love, nor of equal value with it; yet the love that refuses the service will be accounted as nothing. The *mys-*

^b 1 John v. 20.

tery of faith is an invaluable treasure; but the vessel that contains it must be clean and undefiled; it must be *bolden in a pure conscience*; as the manna, that glorious symbol of the word of faith preached to us by the Gospel, was confined to the tabernacle, and preserved in a vessel of gold. A mind that is conformed to this world, and given up to it's pleasures, though it repeat the creed without questioning a single article of it, will be abhorred in the sight of God, as a vessel unfit for the master's use, and unworthy, because unprepared, to stand in the most holy place. It is the great excellency of faith, that it can produce such a transformation in the life and manners, as no other principle has any power to do. But many are possessed of this truth, without applying it to their own advantage. Let them, however, bear in mind, that, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" none of the world's dross or impurity will be suffered to continue in his sight. And in this he is no hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and requiring the fruit of good works, without giving us strength and ability to bring them forth. He has provided for us the precious blood of the Lamb, and offered to us the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled

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to serve that true and living God in whom we believe. If we are purged by HIM, we shall be clean : if he washes us, we shall be whiter than snow ; and when the kingdom of God shall come, and his glory shall appear, we shall be prepared to behold his face in righteousness^c.

The sum of the whole matter, as St. Paul has wonderfully expressed it in a single verse, is this—"Through Christ we have an access by "one Spirit unto the Father^d." To the Father, with a due sense of this great honour and privilege, as sons of God, let us therefore address ourselves, for pardon, and admission to our heavenly inheritance ; "O God, the Father, of "heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sin-
ners!" But as we have no deserts of our own, no works of righteousness by which to claim his favour, and are entitled only through the sufferings and satisfaction of Christ, let us beseech HIM to intercede for us, and plead his merits with the Father ; "O God the Son,

^c It has been asked, "Of what importance the doctrine of "the Trinity can be to the State?" We answer, much, every way ; as it is a doctrine of the Scriptures, and as it is a doctrine pregnant with the noblest motives to christian love and obedience. It therefore requires and demands the support of every state wishing to enjoy the favour and protection of that God, who, for such gracious purposes, hath revealed it.

^d Ephes. ii. 18.

"Redeemer

“ Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us
“ miserable sinners !” And since the benefits
of his merits are applied, and our pardon sealed,
and ourselves enabled to render an acceptable
service, only by the operations and assistances of
the Holy Spirit, let us implore HIS aid also ;
“ O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the
“ Father and the Son, have mercy upon us mi-
“ serable sinners !” Yet remembering, that,
how various soever the œconomy may be, sal-
vation is the one sole undivided end and work
of all ; therefore to ALL let us address our ear-
nest prayers and invocations, as to the Great
Power to whom we have consecrated ourselves
and services ; “ O holy, blessed, and glorious
“ Trinity, three Persons, and one God, have
“ mercy upon us miserable sinners !”

And thou, almighty and everlasting God,
who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the
confession of a true faith to acknowlege the
glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power
of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity ;
we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us
stedfast in this faith ; and evermore defend us
from all adversities ; who livest and reignest one
God world without end.

To

S E R M O N X V .

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To this one God, for the means of grace vouchsafed to us in this life, and for the hopes of glory in another, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, majesty, and dominion, all praise and adoration, both now and for ever.

1941

[illegible]

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT
ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY,
BEFORE THE
GOVERNORS OF THE BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION
FOR THE
DELIVERY OF POOR MARRIED WOMEN
AT THEIR OWN HABITATIONS,
ON SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1788.

3 E R M O L

24 CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY

THURSDAY

GOVERNORS OF THE REFUGES INSTITUTION

FOR THE

DELIVERY OF POOR MARRIED WOMEN

AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE

ON SUNDAY MARCH 25 1860

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S E R M O N XVI.

JOHN IV. II.

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

GREATER injustice cannot be done to the doctrines of Christianity, than to suppose them barren speculations, subjects intended only for the meditations of the pious in their closets, or the controversies of the learned in their writings; and issuing in no conclusions for the benefit of society, and the comfort of mankind. The contrary is happily evinced by the words just read, in which, allusion is made to the incarnation of the Son of God, as the great instance of the divine love toward us; and that love proposed as the principle and the pattern of our love toward our neighbour. “If God so
“loved us,” that he “sent his Son to be the
“propitiation for our sins,”—such are the words immediately preceding the text—then, “we
“ought also to love one another.” We might

ask him, in whom zeal for the welfare of his fellow-creatures burns with the brightest and most ardent flame, what his patriotic and generous heart could wish more, than that men might be brought to this blessed temper of mind? Did it but prevail in it's full extent, it would reform the world at once. Transgression would cease, and with it much of our misery and trouble. The reign of righteousness and happiness would commence, and paradise be, in great measure, restored upon earth. St. Paul assigns the reason, in very few words; "Love worketh no ill to it's neighbour;" it can work him no ill; it can never injure him in his person, his bed, his property, or his character: it cannot so much as conceive a desire for any thing that belongs to him. But it resteth not content with negatives. It not only worketh him no ill, but it must work for him all the good in it's power. Is he hungry? It will give him meat. Is he thirsty? It will give him drink. Is he naked? It will clothe him. Is he sick? It will visit him. Is he sorrowful? It will comfort him. Is he in prison? It will go to him, and, if possible, bring him out. Upon this ground, wars must for ever cease among nations, dissensions of every kind

* Rom. xiii. 10.

among lesser societies, and the individuals that compose them. All must be peace, because all would be love. And thus would every end of the incarnation be accomplished; good will to men, peace on earth, and to God on high glory from both.

In the farther prosecution of the subject, your attention is requested to a few observations on the *motive* proposed by St. John for the duty of charity; and the best *manner* of performing the duty upon that motive.

Many seem to think, that if charity be but shewn, the motive is a matter of indifference. It may be so to the party receiving, but not to the party bestowing. A sick person is equally benefited, whether he, who sits by his bed-side, sits there from real affection, or with design to make a will in his own favour. Nothing can determine the sterling worth of an action, but a knowledge of the motive upon which it is performed. Here, then, we should be very careful not to deceive ourselves. We should deal fairly, and search our hearts to the bottom. In the day of inquisition and retribution, he who made them, and therefore knows what is in them, will certainly do so. Men and angels, on that day, will be made acquainted not only with all

we have done, but with the true reasons why we did it; and the transactions of human life will be found far other than they seem. Nay, there are, even now, men of the world, endowed with sagacious and penetrating minds, who judging partly from what they experience in themselves, and partly from what they have observed in others, are not easily imposed upon. By knowing a person's general character, and laying circumstances together, they will give a shrewd guess at what is passing within, and not be led to take the ostensible motive for the real. Some French authors, and, after them, some English ones, writing upon this plan, have given a very unfavourable representation indeed of human nature. Their *maxims* are by no means universally true; but might be rendered serviceable, if we made use of them, not to censure *others*, but to examine *ourselves*; not to judge our neighbours, but to let our own consciences plead, *Guilty, or Not Guilty*.

In the case before us, some information is necessary for us all, lest, after performing actions of charity, by performing them upon wrong and sinister motives, we become exposed to the mortification of losing their reward. We may perform them merely because there is a decency

gency and propriety in so doing; others perform them, and we should be thought meanly of, were we to omit them: we may perform them out of vanity, to acquire the character of benevolent; a character, to which, perhaps, upon the whole, we have no good title: we may perform them out of envy, lest a rival bear off the honour from us: we may perform them to become popular, and serve by them some secular and political interest: we may perform them in the way of commutation for a favourite sin, in the practice of which we have determined to continue, and hope thus to buy off the punishment due to it. In this last article we shall find ourselves grievously mistaken. In all the rest may be applied the words of our Lord; "You have your reward;" you sought the praise of men; you obtained it: you sought not the praise of God; you obtained it not.

There is yet another motive, concerning which the determination is more difficult—When we perform an act of charity, to escape from the pain we feel at the sight of misery. We relieve the object; but it is, to relieve ourselves. We hear much of these fine *feelings*, from persons who reject with disdain the influence of a higher principle. God forbid we should depreciate this humane and exquisitely tender sentiment,

ment, which the beneficent Author of our nature gave us, as a spur to remove the distresses of others, in order to get rid of our own uneasiness. But it has been justly observed, that, “where
 “not strengthened by superior motives, it is a
 “casual and precarious instrument of good, and
 “ceases to operate, except in the immediate presence, and within the audible cry of misery.
 “This sort of feeling often forgets that any calamity exists which is out of it’s own sight;
 “and though it would empty it’s purse for such
 “an occasional object as rouses transient sensibility, yet it seldom makes any stated provision
 “for miseries, which are not the less real because they do not obtrude upon the sight, and
 “awaken the tenderness of immediate sympathy.
 “This is a sort of mechanical charity, which
 “requires springs and wheels to set it a going^b.”

Not so the real christian charity, recommended in the text to be performed upon another motive — “If God so loved us” — as he hath done — “we ought also to love one another:” A motive at once *rational*, *pure*, and *permanent*.

I say, a *rational* motive. There is indeed a feeling and an affection in the case: but they are founded on the highest truth, and the strongest

^b Thoughts on the Manners of the Great, p. 64.

reason; they are fixed and directed by the judgment. A friend has done me the greatest service in the world; to his kindness I owe every good that I possess, every comfort that I enjoy. His kindness I will therefore return through life, in every instance which falls within my power. This is the principle: it is, in short, *gratitude*; a principle, destitute of which, in social intercourse, the world itself scarce allows to any person more than the name of a man. Such is the idea universally entertained of ingratitude to a friend, a benefactor, a master, a parent, a prince. But does ingratitude, then, change it's nature, and put off it's deformity, when the object is the best of friends, the most generous of benefactors, the most indulgent of masters, the tenderest of parents, and the most gracious of princes? God has made us, and redeemed us; he has given grace, and promised glory. He asks no other return, but that we love him; and, as we can bring no advantage to him by so doing, that we transfer such love, for his sake, to our brethren; and he places it to his own account. In these circumstances, if we love not them, we cannot be deemed to love him. In the whole compass of our knowlege there exists not, surely, a truth, which, while it speaks

so warmly to the human heart, approves itself so completely to the human understanding.

The motive is likewise *pure*. It originates from all that is liberal, generous, and noble, in the soul of man. It has been said, There is a reward promised; and therefore it is mercenary. But they who say this seem not sufficiently to have considered the nature of the reward. I love my friend, and desire, of course, to be with him, to enjoy his company and conversation, and to live in his presence. In all this there is nothing mercenary, nothing sensual, or selfish*. Of such a kind is the reward promised by our heavenly Friend. The desire of it is no sign of the depravity, but of the exaltation and perfection of our souls. The body indeed will have it's share, but not in it's present state. It will be refined, it will be spiritualized; by the working of an almighty power, able to subdue all things to itself, it will be changed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another, and fashioned like unto that of it's great Saviour and Redeemer.

* "The self-love which aims at the rewards of another life, is perfectly consistent with social; the rewards being promised to those only who love their neighbours as themselves." See p. 263 of the Reverend Mr. *Whitaker's* Sermons on Education, which well deserve the attention of all who are concerned in that useful and honourable employment.

The reward is intellectual and divine; and would be no reward to a person who was not himself become so. The motive therefore, notwithstanding the reward, is as pure as it is rational.

And it is as *permanent* as it is pure. Is vanity our motive for charitable actions? It may cease. Is worldly interest? It may fail. Is fashion? It may vanish away. Is a feeling of compassion and sympathy? Such temperaments may change, and often do so. But the argument deduced from the love of God towards us can never fail, any more than that love on which it is founded. It meets us, when we arise in the morning, and when we go to our repose at night; when we behold the heavens, and the earth, and all the hosts of them, serving our necessities, and ministering to our enjoyments; when we find ourselves surrounded by our families and our friends; when we go out, and when we come in; above all, when, as now, we visit his temple, and hear, from his blessed word, the history of those wonderful works that he has wrought, and of the felicity he has prepared for us in another world, when this, in which we now live, shall be passed away, and gone into perdition. Often as we acknowledge these favours, and praise him

him for the mercy which endureth for ever, the question should occur, How can I acknowledge them, with what face can I praise him for them, if, after so much given, I am not ready, upon this principle, to give to others? Verily, our praises, as well as our prayers, will rise up in the judgment against us, and condemn us.—No—if we hope for final acceptance with our God, let us always, in our life and at our death, remember the inference in the text, and act upon it—“If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

The strength of this inference, and the hold it has taken upon your minds, will appear this day, by the support afforded to an institution which needs support, and deserves it.

It *needs* support, as relying solely on the voluntary contributions of well-disposed persons, and must drop, if they are withholden. But it can never be—In this respect, without incurring the charge of self-adulation, we may say, that all nations must yield the palm to Englishmen. At the first call of the kind, they readily “put their hands to the plough;” and when they have so done, it is not their custom to “look back.”

That it *deserves* support, you will all be convinced,

vinced, when it shall have been briefly stated to you, that the objects relieved by it are poor; that they are women; that they are married women, in the most painful and perilous situation; and that the relief is brought home to them, in their own houses.

God could have ordained that all should have been rich. But he has not so ordained. Poverty, with every other evil, came in, upon man's transgression. The alteration, which then took place in the earth, rendered labour necessary. If none were poor, none would labour; and if some did not labour, none could eat. Difference there must be in rank and order; and the rich are not of more service to the poor, than the poor to them. Equality of condition could not subsist by the constitution of nature, as the case has stood since the fall. It must be effected by a new way; by the dispensation of love and charity. The indigence of some must be helped by the superfluity of others. "The poor shall never
"cease out of thy land," says the God of Israel to his favoured people; "therefore, I command
"thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide to
"thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy,
"in thy land." An opportunity of being blessed

• Deut. xv. 11.

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is offered to the wealthy, and they should take particular care not to let it pass them unregarded; for, "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy." In the sight of God, we are all poor. "He openeth his hand," and from it we receive, both for our bodies and our souls, food and raiment, medicine, liberty, and joy. Our Saviour himself, rich in the possession of all things visible and invisible, yet for our sakes became poor; he has directed us, in the persons of the poor, to behold him, as present, and when they solicit our charity, to bestow it accordingly. On the behalf of poverty, more cannot be said.

But it is peculiarly afflictive, when it falls upon the weaker sex. At the sight of *them* in distress, few hearts are so hard as not to relent, and shew mercy and compassion. Formed originally from man, to man they of course look up for support. It is his duty, and, in all civilized nations, it has ever been his glory, to afford it. Their claim upon us is indeed a just one. They were created as help-mates, and through life are found to be such. From the cradle to the grave, from the swaddling-clothes to the winding-sheet, we are indebted to their good offices; offices which can with propriety be performed

performed by them alone. By them is the burden of cares domestic and æconomical taken off from us. The tenderness and sympathy of their nature alleviate our sorrows, their affection and fidelity double our joys.

The persons assisted by our Benevolent Institution are *married* women. For those in a single state, whom thoughtless, unfeeling, cruel profligacy had seduced, and over whom savage brutal lust had tyrannized for a time, and then cast them, destitute and forlorn, upon the public, where there was none to help; for such, I say, when sufferings, and the grace of God co-operating had led them to repentance, and to seek forgiveness, where we must all seek it, at the hands of a Redeemer—for such, a house of refuge has been opened, and ample provision made in it of all the assistance requisite for the purpose. And a noble charity it is. “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;” there is a joy peculiar to the circumstance of the sheep that is *found*, which cannot happen, unless that sheep has been *lost*. But let us not therefore, in the mean time, forget the wants sustained by such of the flock as, having not wandered, require attention and provision in the fold. “Marriage is honourable :” God has pronounced it
to

to be so, and man cannot render it otherwise. By it's offspring come the strength of kingdoms, the establishment of thrones, and the upholding of the world. Among the Romans, more than four ages elapsed, from the foundation of their city, without any complaint, or process, on account of adultery; and it was not till the year 521, that they saw the first divorce; when, though the cause was specious, the indignation of all Rome pursued the divorcer, to the end of his days. These men were heathens; but their morals put Christians wofully to the blush! Let us not be wanting in our endeavours to roll away the reproach which lies so *heavy* on the present generation by this instance of regard shewn to the honest and faithful married.

It is shewn at a time when they most need it—a time of distress and anguish, when they are suffering under the sentence passed from the beginning; when pains of body, sorrows of heart, and terrors of imagination, assail them with combined forces; when the enemy compasses them round about, and poverty has set all help at a distance. Their cries have been heard by the Lord of Sabaoth, and he hath raised up friends to their assistance. They have obtained mercy from God to be “*saved in child-bearing;*”
they

they should obtain it from you. If it be true, as the wise man has observed, that “by a woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die;” no less true it is, that when the Saviour was *born*, “by a woman came the beginning of *righteousness*, and through her we all *live*.” “I am come,” says that Saviour himself, “that ye might have life; and that ye might have it more abundantly.” Evil is swallowed up by good; and it must be through our own fault, if we do not become gainers by our loss. Sublime and beautiful is the exultation of Mary, upon the occasion, over the great enemy — “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name; and his mercy is on them that fear him, throughout all generations.”

Lastly, the persons for whom your benevolence is this day intreated, are not of the number of those wandering and professional mendicants, who meet you, at every turn, with their clamorous and importunate petitions. Sober, and laborious, they are to be found at home; quiet, though wretched;

wretched; visited only by that charity, which, like the influence of heaven's great luminary, penetrates into the deepest recesses, and "no-thing is hidden from the heat thereof." Thither our Institution goes to find them, and carries to their own houses the best medical, and every other necessary assistance. By the subscriptions of a generous public, Hospitals have been erected, and are supported, for the same purpose. Without in the least depreciating them, or detracting from their utility, it may yet be truly said, that there are some superior advantages attending the present plan. The wife is not absent from her family, where, though, for a time, she cannot herself do much, yet she can direct what is to be done; the husband can go forth to his labour, not an hour of which can well be spared; he is not induced to spend his evenings abroad in public houses, which may occasion his ruin, and that of his family; being an eye witness to the sorrows of his wife, the love between them is increased; and affection for the new-born offspring will stimulate him afresh to industry*.

* See An Account of the Benevolent Institution for the sole purpose of delivering poor married women at their own habitations, printed in the year 1786. By this it appears, that since the establishment, in 1780, 9819 persons have been delivered.

All possible circumstances appear to concur in recommending to your notice a scheme thus calculated for the preservation of life, the relief of indigence, the honour of marriage, the encouragement of population, and, as a consequence of all, the general welfare of society. It must be approved, as soon as known; and when approved, it will be encouraged. To these poor, but not the less valuable mothers, in the hour of their utmost distress, and sharpest anguish, open your hands, and open them wide. Whatever you bestow, it will be well bestowed, and properly expended. In every sense truly respectable, honourable and noble are the persons, who have been pleased to take upon themselves the superintendence of the expenditure. Parsimony, at this time, would be œconomy ill placed indeed. Spare something in the magnificence of your houses, and style of living, in the splendor of your furniture, the costliness of your apparel, the luxury of your tables, and your visits to public places; but in your charity spare nothing. On the receipt of your incomes, set aside immediately some certain portion for this purpose. When objects offer, there will be a fund to draw upon: you will give cheerfully, and without grudging; you will always be giving, you will always have

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something

something to give: and that which is so given will be returned to you, with increase abundant and eternal, when, in the sight of assembled nations, and all the hosts of heaven, the saying will be verified — “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

F I N I S.

